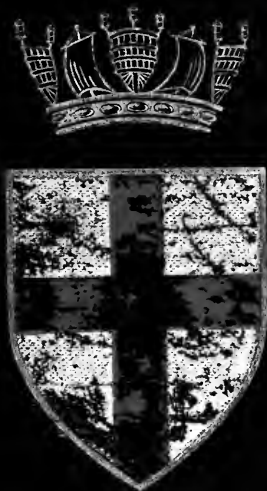


# CHAMPIONS OF THE FLEET



BY EDWARD FRASER



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# CHAMPIONS OF THE FLEET

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

FAMOUS FIGHTERS OF THE FLEET.

THE ENEMY AT TRAFALGAR.

THE ROMANCE OF THE KING'S NAVY.

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CHAMPIONS THEN AND NOW: THE VICTORY AND THE DREADNOUGHT  
Both ships, and the submarine alongside the "Victory," are shown on the same scale. The picture is reproduced by kind permission of the Proprietors of the "Illustrated London News." Photos by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

# CHAMPIONS OF THE FLEET

CAPTAINS AND MEN-OF-WAR  
AND DAYS THAT HELPED TO  
MAKE THE EMPIRE   §    §  
BY EDWARD FRASER   §    §  
WITH 19 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

THESE tales of the navy of the fighting days of old are to some extent, it may seem, cruises in rather out-of-the-way waters. At the same time, they may claim present-day associations that should render them not out of place just now. How and why, for instance, the world-famous name *Dreadnought* came into the Royal Navy is a story of interest on its own account that ought to be timely. With that also is told something of what our *Dreadnoughts* of old did under fire in the fighting days of history: with Drake; against the Armada; with Sir Walter Raleigh; against De Ruyter and the Dutchmen; at La Hogue; how one gave the *sobriquet* "Old Dreadnought" to the famous Boscawen; how Nelson's uncle and patron Maurice Suckling captained the same ship in battle; of Collingwood in the *Dreadnought*; and of the *Dreadnought* at Trafalgar. We get, too, a passing glance at certain of the "points" of our mighty battleship the *Dreadnought* of the present hour. Again, in the year that has seen the name of Clive recalled to the memory of his countrymen by an ex-Viceroy of

India in connection with the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Plassey, what the navy did for Clive at the most critical moment of his fortunes, how without its active support on the field of battle Clive would have been powerless, the forgotten, or certainly little appreciated, part that the navy took in the founding of our Indian empire—should be of interest to English readers. This year again sees a new *Téméraire*, one of our “improved *Dreadnoughts*,” added to the Royal Navy. The fine story of how the never-to-be-forgotten name *Téméraire*—immortalized alike by Turner and by Trafalgar—first came to appear on the roll of the British fleet is told here. And it should be of interest to recall certain incidental matters concerning the old *Victory* herself: among others the circumstances in which she came to be built and was safely sent afloat in spite of expected incendiarism; where too those who fought on board at Trafalgar came from, and how many representatives each of our counties had with Nelson in his last fight. Such are some of the matters dealt with in these pages, which of themselves should afford entertainment and help also to make this book useful.

E. F.



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Both ships, and the submarine alongside the *Victory*, are shown on the same scale. The picture is reproduced by kind permission of the proprietors of the *Illustrated London News*. Photos by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

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To the fame of your name  
When the storm has ceased to blow ;  
When the fiery fight is heard no more,  
And the storm has ceased to blow.

# CHAMPIONS OF THE FLEET

I

OUR *DREADNOUGHTS*:—

THEIR NAME AND BATTLE RECORD

A name through all the world renown'd,  
A name that rouses as a trumpet sound.

THE “Massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day”—on the 24th of August, 1572—was directly the cause of the coming into existence of our first *Dreadnought*.

Startled and horrified at the terrible news, as the details of the ghastly story crossed the channel, Queen Elizabeth replied by instantly calling the forces of England to arms. John Hawkins, at the head of twenty ships of war, was sent to cruise off the Azores. The rest of the fleet was ordered to mobilize and be ready to concentrate in the Downs. Instructions were issued for the beacons to be watched. The militia were ordered to muster and march to the coast. A subsidy was sent over to the Protestants

in Holland, and a rush of volunteers followed to join those from England already in the field. Huguenot refugees in this country were given leave to fit out vessels to help their co-religionists at La Rochelle. Four men-of-war for the Royal Navy were ordered to be laid down forthwith. They comprised the most important effort in shipbuilding that England had made for ten years.

To facilitate rapidity of building, the work on the four vessels was divided between the two chief master-shipwrights—or, as we should say, naval constructors—of the day : two ships to Matthew Baker, two ships to Peter Pett. Both men were at the top of their profession. Peter Pett was a distinguished member of the great family of naval shipwrights, whose fame has come down to our own times. Baker, who was also of a family of naval shipwrights of repute, was considered by many of the naval officers of the day as the better man. “Mr. Baker,” wrote one, “for his skill and surpassing grounded knowledge in the building of the ships advantageable to all purposes hath not in any nation his equal.” Pett and Baker were keen business rivals, and their rivalry came into play on the present occasion.

The names of the new ships were announced in due course, and represented Her Majesty’s mood on the occasion. She herself selected and appointed them with intention. It was Queen Elizabeth’s way to give her ships “telling” names. “The choice of energetic names for the ships of her Royal Navy,”



it has been said, "was one of the means employed by the heroic and politic Elizabeth to infuse her own dauntless spirit into the hearts of her subjects, and to show to Europe at large how little she dreaded the mightiest armaments of her enemies." More than that, however, needs to be said. As a rule, in the cases of her bigger ships, the Queen chose names that carried, in addition, an underlying meaning, that bore direct allusion to some national event of the hour. According to one who lived at the time, writing about the first ship launched by the Queen, to which, in accordance with old custom, the sovereign's name was given: "The great Shipp called the *Elizabeth Jonas* was so named by Her Grace in remembrance of her owne delyverance from the furye of her Enemys, from which in one respect she was no less myraculously preserved than was the prophet Jonas from the Belly of the whale." In like manner our first *Victory* and our first *Triumph* were given those ever famous names, in the first place, of set intention to commemorate the historic double-event of the year in which they both joined the Queen's fleet. The *Aid*, or *Ayde*, another Elizabethan man-of-war, was so called to commemorate Elizabeth's first expedition to help the Huguenots of Normandy in their forlorn hope struggle for liberty of conscience, which was just setting out when the *Aid* went off the stocks. Our first *Revenge*, of immortal renown, did not receive that name at haphazard in the year of Don John of Austria's insolent threat to invade England and

depose Elizabeth by force of arms. Our first *Repulse* was appointed that name—extant to this day in the Royal Navy for one of our older battle-ships—in memory of the defeat of the Spanish Armada :—*Dieu Repulse* was the earlier form of the name as the Queen gave it. And to take at random two other names from the list, it was to commemorate the same overthrow of the arch-enemy of England in those times that Queen Elizabeth chose the names *Defiance* and *Warspite*—in curious reference, this latter name, to an incident during the fighting with the Armada—for two others of her men-of-war.

It was of set purpose that Queen Elizabeth, in the year of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, chose the name *Dreadnought* for one of her ships of war. The intentions of the Catholic League towards England were an open secret in every council chamber of Europe. The papal Bull, excommunicating and deposing Elizabeth, had been nailed on the doors of Lambeth Palace. It was at their disposal. Alva's butcheries in the Netherlands were fresh in the recollection of the world, and the memory of other dark doings came still more closely home to our own people ; how Englishmen had been "seized in Spain and the New World to linger amidst the tortures of the Inquisition or to die by its fires." Burghley and Walsingham, and others as well, had fully understood the menace for England and the warning of Lepanto only two years before. Their secret agents had supplied them with a copy of De Spes' confidential report to Alva and King

Philip to the effect that the ports of England were poorly fortified, and that only eleven at most of Queen Elizabeth's twenty ships of war were worth taking into account. They had not forgotten what had happened three years before, when, under the guise of an escort for the new Queen of Spain from Flanders to the Tagus, an extremely formidable Spanish fleet, fully equipped for war, had come north and lain for some weeks in the Scheldt, acting throughout in a very suspicious way. That was a twelvemonth before Lepanto. Now the situation seemed even more menacing for England. The Queen's so-called Agreement with Spain, lately come to, for practical purposes was hardly worth the paper it was drafted on. There was Mary Stuart and her partizans to be reckoned with also; the restless intriguing of the Roman Catholics all over England; open rebellion in Ireland. What might not the consequences of the Paris massacre involve in the near future? It was at such a moment that the name *Dreadnought* was first appointed to an English man-of-war, and the Queen's choice in the circumstances partook of the nature almost of an Act of State, specially designed to express the temper of the nation. In the same spirit of exalted patriotism in which, at a later day, Elizabeth, from Tilbury camp, with proud scorn bade King Philip and the Prince of Parma and all other enemies of the realm do their worst, the great Queen, of her own royal will and pleasure, named for the Royal Navy its first *Dreadnought*.

*Swiftsure* was the name given to the second ship of the set. "Swift-suer" was the way the Queen Elizabeth spelled it—"Swift-pursuer," that is—not an inappropriate name for the sister ship of a *Dreadnought*. The pair were intended as ships of the line, to use a later day term. The other two ships of the group were smaller vessels of the light cruiser class of the period, intended for service as scouts, as the "eyes and ears of the fleet" at sea. Their names were the *Achates* and the *Handmaid*, expressive names both in their way.

Matthew Baker's men had the *Dreadnought* and *Handmaid* to build; Pett's men the *Swiftsure* and the *Achates*. They all started work within three weeks, and Pett's men won the race by just a month. The *Swiftsure* and the *Achates* were both sent afloat on the 11th of October, 1573; the *Dreadnought* and the *Handmaid* on the 10th of the following month.

An Arctic explorer of those times, whose name lives on our maps—the man, indeed, who named the North Cape for us, Captain Stephen Borough (or Borogh, as he himself usually wrote it), one of "ye foure Principall Masters in Ordinarye of ye Queene's Ma<sup>tie's</sup> Navye Royall," by special appointment also the Master of the *Victory*, and a son of North Devon in her proudest day—had naval charge and supervision over the building of the *Dreadnought* and the other ships at Deptford. He lodged meanwhile at Ratcliffe, across the river, and his "traveylinge chardges," with the waterman's receipt for rowing him to and fro on his weekly visits of inspection, signed

"Richard Williams of Ratcliff, Whyrryman," is still in existence.

The marshmen and labourers at the dockyard began their digging, "working upon ye opening of ye dockhedde for ye launchynge," during the first days of November. That was the first of the preliminaries, necessitated by the primitive arrangements of those times. The dock at Deptford in which the timbers of the *Dreadnought* were put together was of the crudest type: practically an oblong excavation in the river bank, the sides and inner end of which were shored up and kept from falling in by wooden planks. The outer end, or river end, was closed and sealed when a ship was inside by a water-tight dam of brushwood-faggots, clay, and stones filled in and rammed down between the overlapping double gates of the dock. An "ingyn to drawe water owte of ye dokke," worked by relays of labourers, pumped out the water inside the dock after it was closed. Before the dock could be re-opened the stones, faggots, etc. of the "tamping" or stopping had to be dug up and removed. Then at low water the gates would be swung back, and the water from the river flow in as the tide rose for the launch or float-out of the ship into the river.

On board the *Dreadnought*, meanwhile, the finishing touches were being put by the contractors' workmen—Thomas Hodges, of "Parris Garden," and Thomas Wells, of Chatham, and their men seeing to the ironwork fittings, "ye workmanshipp and making

of lockes and boltes, keyes and haidges [*sic*] for ij newe cabbons, as also for hookes, and stockelockes, porthaidges [*sic*], revetts and countre-revetts, shutt-ynges with rings, greate dufftayles and divers other necessities"; joiners sent by "Jullyan Richards of London, widdow," who had a contract for certain other fittings; other joiners from Lewys Stocker, also of London, seeing to "ye sellynges [*sic*] and formysling ye cabbins and makyng case-ments for windows, seelings, awmeryes [*sic*], cupboards, settes, bedsteddes, formes, stools, trisstelles, tables," etc. "for her Grace's newe shippe ye *Dreadnaughte*." Hard by, alongside Deptford creek, were lying the masts for the ship, ready to be put in place after she was afloat; with "toppes greate and small, mayne-tops, fflore-toppe, mizzen-toppe, and toppe-galantes;" besides barge loads from Richard Pope, of "Ereth," of "gravaille for ye ballistynge of hur highness Shipe called ye *Dreadnaughte* at iiij<sup>d</sup> every time." Prest-master Thomas Woodcot was meanwhile hard at work elsewhere, "travaylling about the presting of marynnars within the River of Theames for ye Launchynge and Rigging of Hur highnes' ij newe shippes at Deptfordstraund [*sic*] by the space of viii daies at iijs iiijd per diem."

The future "nucleus crew" of the *Dreadnought*, who were to act as ship-keepers on board when the ship went round to moor with the rest of the fleet laid up in the Medway, had been warned to be at Deptford by the morning of the 10th of November. They were drawn apparently from the ships lying

off Gillingham, just below Chatham, or "Jillingham Ordinarie"—the "Fleet Reserve," as we say nowadays—and numbered, all told, ten men and a boy. These were the names of our original "Dreadnoughts" of three hundred and thirty-three years ago, and their quarterly pay, according to "The Accompte as well Ordinarie as Extraordinarie of Benjamin Gonson, Treasurer of ye Quene's Majestie's Maryn cawses," 1574, a quaint, bulky, ponderous, parchment covered volume, of massive proportions, laced with faded green silk, and bound with leather straps, now well worn and in parts frayed nearly away :

## THE "DREADNAUGHTE."

## MARYNERS.

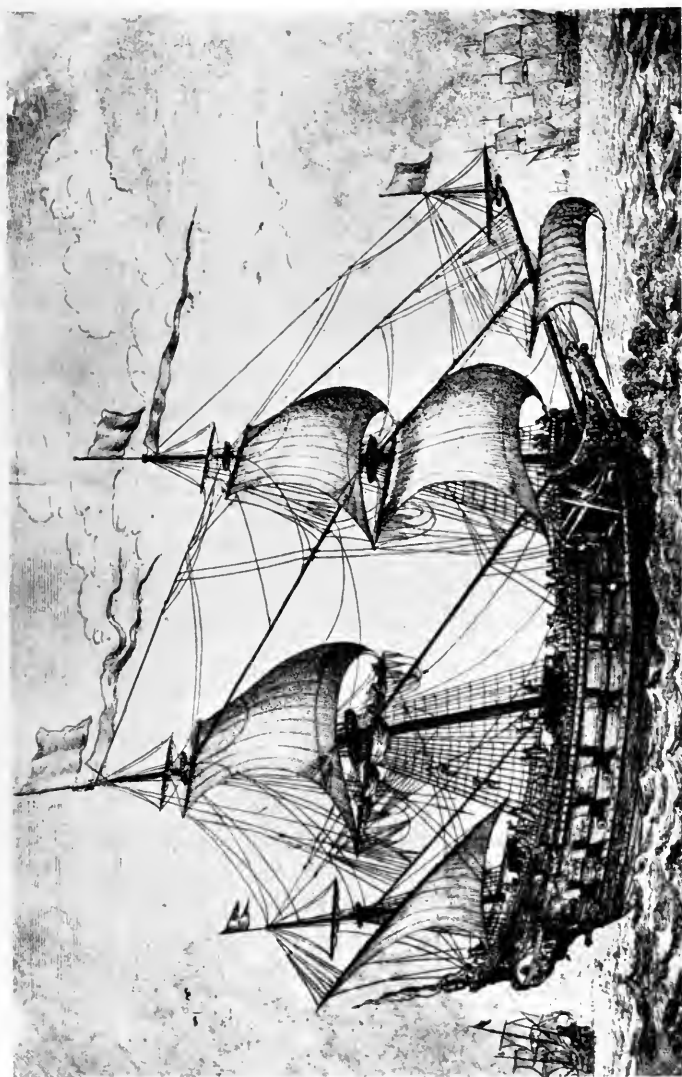
Robarte Baxster, boteson :—	xij wekes vj daies .	xxxvij <sup>s</sup>	vj <sup>d</sup>
Richard Boureman, cooke :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxix <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
John Awsten :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
Nicholas Francton :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
Christofer Parr, gromett :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	j <sup>d</sup>
Henry Osbourne :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
James Laske :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
Richard Shutt :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
Robartt Woodnaughtt :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
William Appleford :	xij wekes vj daies .	xxj <sup>s</sup>	v <sup>d</sup>
John Hunt, master gonner :	xij wekes vj daies	xxxij <sup>s</sup>	ij <sup>d</sup>

This is what the *Dreadnought* looked like as she lay in the dock on the Tuesday morning that saw the ship take the water. Imagine a solid-looking heavily-timbered hull, round bowed, with long, raking forward prow or beak, reaching out some ten or twelve yards ahead of the actual vessel, and with at the after-end a lofty towering poop with shallow over-

hanging balustraded gallery. Amidships the vessel is of a width equal to nearly a third of her length. From the "greate beaste," the figure-head—a dragon—"gilded and laid with fine gold," representing one of the supporters of the Queen's arms, set up on the tip of the beak, away aft to the stern gallery is a distance of, over all, about a hundred and twenty feet. The body of the hull itself has a keel length of some eighty feet—from rudder post to fore-foot. Along the water-line the bends are all tarred over, with varnished side planking above, tough oak timber from the Crown lands of the Sussex Weald by Horsham. The topsides above are varnished to the bulwarks, where a touch of colour shows; ornamental carved and painted work in royal Tudor green and white, laid on in "colours of oil" and garnished with Her Majesty's family badges in gold, and with here and there, on the balustrades of the quarter-rails and stern gallery, an additional touch of red. On the stern, "painted in oils," are the arms of England, with the Lion and the Dragon, the Queen's royal supporters, and below, on a scroll, Her Majesty's motto, *Semper Eadem*.

These are other things about the ship that would strike the Deptford visitor of that day. The square-headed forecastle is low and squat in appearance, compared with the piled-up, narrow poop right aft, looking over from which a foreign visitor to the Queen's fleet once declared that "it made one shudder to look downwards." The bottom of the





OUR FIRST DREADNOUGHT

*From a Contemporary Print kindly lent by Mr. Wentworth Hayshe. (The "Dreadnought" is shown as she appeared when serving in the "Ship Money" Fleet of Charles the First;—circa, 1637.)*



ship is coated with "tallow and rosin mingled with pitch." The square-cut, wide portholes, out of which the guns will point when they are on board—the Tower lighters will bring them down for mounting in a week or two—were the idea, they say in the yard, of Master Shipwright Baker's father, old James Baker, many years ago King Harry's shipwright, improving on the original French style. It was old Baker too, they say, who "first adapted English ships to carry heavy guns." The Reformers wanted to send the old man to the stake for "being in the possession of some forbidden books"; but King Harry could not afford to let them burn England's best naval architect even for the benefit of Protestantism.

The *Dreadnought's* gun-ports should open some four feet clear of the water. People have not forgotten the horror of the *Mary Rose*; what happened to her; how she came to go down one summer's day at Spithead. The waist bulwarks of the *Dreadnought*, if she swims as she ought, will be some twenty feet above the water-line. Nearly four hundred tons in burden is our new man-of-war—five tons heavier than the *Swiftsure*, than which ship too she is six feet longer, though the pair reckon as sister ships. Upwards of six thousand pounds out of Queen Elizabeth's treasury (about £30,000 at present day value) will have been the cost of the *Dreadnought* when she leaves Deptford dockyard.

We will go on board for a brief look round the *Dreadnought* within. As we enter the ship we note

how both the half-deck and the fore and aft castles are loopholed for both arrow-fire and musketry, so as to sweep the waist should an enemy board and get a footing amidships. Some of the lighter guns would be able to help. The heavier guns are mostly on the broadside, and are mounted on the decks below in a double tier. The *Dreadnought* altogether carries forty-two guns. Sixteen of them are heavy guns: two "cannon-periers" of six-inch bore, hard hitters, firing twenty-four pounder stone shot; four "culverins," seventeen and a half pounders, twelve feet long and five and half inches in the bore, firing iron shot, and able to throw a ball upwards of three miles—"random shot." There are also ten "demi-culverins," nine-pounders, firing four and a half inch iron shot. The lighter guns are six "sakers," pieces nine feet long (five-pounders, of three and a half inch bore), and two "fawcons" (three-pounders). The heavier guns are all muzzle-loaders. Distributed over the upper decks are eighteen breech-loading guns, for fighting at close quarters and rapid firing: "port-pieces," "fowlers," and "bases," as they are called. They are on swivel mountings, and fire stone and iron shot.

All told, the *Dreadnought's* armament weighs thirty-two tons. The guns are from Master Ralphe Hogge, "the Queen's gunstone maker, and gun-founder to the Council." They are of Sussex iron, from Master Hogge's own foundry at Buxted. At this moment they are waiting at the Tower, together

with the *Dreadnought's* supplies of iron shot and cannon balls of Kentish ragstone from Her Majesty's quarries at Maidstone, stacked "in ye Bynns upon ye Tower Wharfe each side Traitor's Gate." When the *Dreadnought* goes into battle she will carry some two hundred officers and men all told: a hundred and thirty "maryners"—"Able men for topyard, helme and lead," and "gromets," or boys and "Fresh men"; with twenty gunners and fifty soldiers. To keep her at sea will cost the Queen £303. 6s. 8d. a month for sea-wages and victualling. Three weeks provisions and water is the most that the ship can stow, owing to the space wanted for the ballast, the cables for the four anchors, and the ammunition and sea stores. That is why victualling ships have to attend Her Majesty's fleets on service outside the Narrow Seas. The "cook room," of bricks and iron and paving stones, is in the hold over the ballast. Two more notes may be made as we return on deck and quit the ship. The captain's cabin, opening on the gallery aft, is neatly wainscoted and garnished with green and white chintz, and with curtains of darnix hung at the latticed cabin windows. There are three boats for the *Dreadnought*: the "great boat," which tows astern at all times, the cock-boat and the skiff, both of which stow inboard. John Clerk, "of Redryffe, Shipwrighte," built the "great boat," being paid £24, in the terms of his bill, "For the Workmanship and makeinge of a new Boate for her Highness' Shipp, the *Dreadnought*; conteyninge xi foote

Di. in lengthe ; ix foote Di. in Breadthe ; and iij foote ij inches in Depthe.—By agreement.”

A brave show should our gallant *Dreadnought* make when she goes forth to war, with her varnished sides and rows of frowning guns and painted top-armours (the handiwork, according to his bill, of Master Coteley, of Deptford), and all her wide spreading sails set (“John Hawkins, Esquire, of London,” supplied these), and at the masthead, high above all, her flag of St. George of white Dowlas canvas with a blood-red cross of cloth sewn on.

The appointed day has come, and the time for the sending afloat and formal naming of the *Dreadnought*: Tuesday afternoon, the 10th of November, 1573.

The ship lies ready for launching at the appointed moment, having been duly “struck” upon the launching ways a day or two before, under the supervision of Master Baker himself, in the dock where she has been building ; shored up on either side, and with the lifting screws and “crabs” prepared to heave her off. The dockhead has been dug out and finally cleared at low tide on Monday, leaving the double gates free and in order, ready to be swung back and opened as soon as the tide begins to make on Tuesday morning.

We will imagine ourselves on the spot at the time and looking on at what took place. It is possible to

do so, thanks to a manuscript left by Phineas Pett, Peter's son and successor at Deptford royal yard.

All is ready for the day's proceedings by a little after noon, when the important personages taking part at the launch, "by commandement of ye officers of Her Grace's Maryn Causys," and the invited guests and superior officials of the dockyard assemble for a light refection of cake and wine in the Master Shipwright's "lodging," preliminary to the ceremony.

Who named the *Dreadnought* on that day? Unfortunately that one detail is not mentioned in any existing record, and the Navy Office book for the year, where the name would certainly have been found, together with the honorarium or fee, paid according to custom, is missing. Most probably it was Captain Stephen Borough himself, and we may imagine him there, apparelled for the day in crimson velvet and gold lace, in the full uniform of one entitled to wear "Her Ma<sup>ties</sup> cote of ordinarie." His rank and standing as one of the "Principall Masters of the Queen's Ma<sup>ties</sup> Navie in Ordinarie" qualified him for performance of so dignified a duty. The Principal Masters were often deputed by the Lord High Admiral to preside on his behalf at the launches of men-of-war and perform the name-giving ceremony.

While the high officers are having their refreshments in Master Shipwright Baker's lodging, Boat-swain Baxster and the assistant shipwrights are stationing the men on board and at the launching tackles. The customary "musicke" then makes its

appearance, "a noyse of trumpetts and drums," who post themselves on the poop and the forecastle of the ship. Next, a "standing cup" of silver-gilt, filled to the brim with Malmsey of the best, is set up on a pedestal fixed prominently on the poop, and the Queen's colours are hoisted on board, together with the flag of St. George. At the same time pennons and streamers of Tudor green and white, and decorated with royal emblems and badges, are ranged here and there along the ship's sides and on the forecastle.

All is ready ere long, and then, forthwith, word is sent to Master Shipwright Baker and the gentlemen of the company. Forthwith the procession forms itself and sets out in stately fashion to go on board.

With his grey hair unbonneted  
The old sea-captain comes ;  
Behind him march the halberdiers,  
Before him sound the drums.

So escorted and attended the personage of the hour paces his way forth and proceeds on board the new ship, passing along the decks and ascending to the poop where the company group themselves according to precedence, near by the glittering silver-gilt wine cup. Master Shipwright Baker then gives the signal, and Boatswain Baxster's whistle shrills out. At once the gangs of men standing ready at the crabs and windlasses heave taut, and a moment later, as the ship begins her first movement outwards, the trumpets and drums sound forth. So, at a leisurely rate at the outset, gliding off foot by



foot into deeper water, the new man-of-war hauls gradually out and clears past the dock gates till well into the stream. The anchor is then let go and she brings up. Now it is for Captain Borough—allowing it to have been he—to do his part.

Stans procul in prorâ, pateram tenet extaque salsos  
Porricit in fluctus ac vina liquentia fundit.

The trumpets and drums cease as the "Principall Master" steps forward and takes up his position beside the standing cup. He raises the gleaming cup on high so that all around may see. Then, amid universal silence, he proclaims, in a clear resonant voice that every one may hear: "By commandment of Her Grace, whom God preserve, I name this ship the *Dreadnought*! God save the Queen!" As the Lord High Admiral's representative utters the last word, he drinks from the cup, and a moment after ceremoniously pours out a portion of the wine upon the deck. The next moment, with a wide sweep of the arm, he heaves the standing cup, with a little wine left in it, into the river—a sacrifice, as it were, on behalf of the bride newly-wedded to the sea, or that the Queen's cup might never be put to base uses—perhaps, indeed, as a sort of propitiatory act. So it was done, says Master Phineas Pett, "according to the ancient custom and ceremony performed at such times." Again there is a blare of trumpets and a ruffle from the drums, with cheers afloat and ashore for Her Grace, and hearty congratulations to Master Matthew Baker on the occasion. After that the *Dreadnought* is formally inspected between

decks and below, and the crew's health is drunk by the high officers in ship's beer—sure to be of a good brew on a launching day.

By the time that all is over the ship has been warped back alongside the shore again, and the company adjourn thereupon to wind up the day's proceedings with a good old English dinner, given to the Master Shipwright and the officials of the yard at the Lord High Admiral's expense.

Such is a passing glimpse of the memorable scene—as far as one may venture to reconstruct it—on “Dreadnought Day” at Deptford Royal Dockyard, that Tuesday afternoon, in Tudor times, three hundred and thirty-three years ago. It is hard to fancy such doings, at Deptford of all places, now. Oxen and sheep for the London meat market nowadays stand penned in lairs on the site of the filled-in dock whence the *Dreadnought* was floated out—the same dock whence the *Armada Victory* had preceded her, whence Grenville's *Revenge* followed her. Master Shipwright Baker's lodging is nowadays a cattle drovers' drinking bar. The old-time navy buildings—their origin even now easily recognisable, at any rate externally—serve as slaughter-houses, and so forth, among which rough butcher lads, reeking of the shambles, jostle daily to and fro. On every side is bustle and clatter and hustling, the rumbling of Smithfield meat vans over the old-time cobble stones, the jargon of Yankee bullock-men, the bleating of sheep under sentence of death. Strange and hard is the fate that

in these material times of ours has overtaken what was once the premier Royal Dockyard of England, this former temple, so to speak, of the guardian deity of our sea-girt realm :

This ruined shrine  
Whence worship ne'er shall rise again :—  
The owl and bat inhabit here  
The snake nests in the altar stone,  
The sacred vessels moulder near—  
The image of the god is gone !

Fallen indeed from its high estate of former days is the ancient royal establishment of "Navy-building town." Where bluff King Hal used to walk and talk with Matthew Baker's father, "old honest Jem"; where our sixth Edward paid a long-remembered visit, to be "banketted" (as the royal spelling has it) and see two men-of-war go off the ways; where Elizabeth knighted Francis Drake, and James and Charles rode down in state on many a gala day; where Cromwell paid his second naval visit—his "grandees" attending him, and escort of clanking Ironsides—to see the vindictively named *Naseby* take the water; where our second Charles liked to saunter on occasion with Rupert at his side, and chattering Pepys and John Evelyn in his train; where James the Second, dull and morose of mood, for the sands of his monarchy were already running out, paid his last historic visit one gloomy autumn afternoon of 1688; where brave old Benbow liked best to spend the mornings of his half-pay life on shore, and Captain Cook set out on his last voyage; where George the Third drove down with Queen Charlotte

to do honour to the naming of a *Prince of Wales* man-of-war; where, too, Royalty of our own time has more than once visited—is now “a market for the landing, sale, and slaughtering of foreign cattle.” The glory has departed—the image of the god is gone!

The *Dreadnought* and *Swiftsure* and the two smaller ships were masted and rigged and completed for service during November and the early days of December, after which, with the help of a hundred and fifty extra hands, “prested in ye river of Theames for ye transportyngs about,” they set off on the twentieth of the month to join the fleet lying “in ordinary” in the Medway—an eight days’ voyage as it proved, owing to squally weather and an east wind. The Queen was to have seen the *Dreadnought* and her squadron pass the palace at Greenwich and salute the royal standard with cannon and a display of masthead flags, as was the Tudor naval usage when the sovereign was in residence, but there had been a domestic misadventure at Placentia just a few days before. While talking with her maids of honour one afternoon, one of the Queen’s ladies—“the Mother of the Maids”—had suddenly dropped dead in the royal presence, and the Court had hastily removed to Whitehall. So the *Dreadnought* had no royal standard to salute. Three days after Christmas the Deptford squadron took up their moorings in “Jillingham water.”

“Powerful vessels . . . with little tophammer and very light, which is a great advantage for close quarters and with much artillery, the heavy pieces being close to the water,” reported, in a confidential letter now in the royal archives at Simancas, one of the King of Spain’s agents in England who saw the *Dreadnought* and *Swiftsure* not long after they had joined the Medway fleet. So too, indeed, some of King Philip’s sailors were destined to find out for themselves.

The Dons, indeed, were destined to taste something of the *Dreadnought’s* quality more than once; beginning with the memorable event of the “Singeing of the King of Spain’s Beard.” There, Drake’s right-hand man on many a battle day, commanded the *Dreadnought*, Captain Thomas Fenner, a sturdy son of Sussex and a seaman who knew his business.

How thoroughly Drake—“fiend incarnate; his name Tartarean, unfit for Christian lips; Draco—a dragon, a serpent, emblem of Diabolus; Satanas himself”—did his work among the Spaniards at Cadiz, burning eighteen of their finest royal galleons, and carrying off six more in spite of fireships and all the shooting of the Spanish batteries, is history. The *Dreadnought*, after experiencing a narrow escape from shipwreck off Cape Finisterre at the outset of her cruise, took her full share of what fighting there was. She was present, too, at the second act of the drama, which took place off the

Tagus with so fatal a sequel for the hapless Commander-in-Chief designate of the Armada, the Marquis de Santa Cruz—the “Iron Marquis,” “Thunderbolt of War,” the real Hero of Lepanto, by reputation the ablest sea-officer the world had yet seen. First, the news that his flagship and the finest fighting galleons of his own picked squadron—all named, too, after the most helpful among the Blessed Saints of the Calendar—together with his best transports and victuallers, had been boarded and taken and sacrilegiously set ablaze to, burned to the water’s edge, one after the other, by those “accursed English Lutheran dogs.” Worse still. To be then defied to his face, he, Spain’s “Captain-General of the Ocean”; to be audaciously challenged to come out and fight and have his revenge then and there—Drake and the *Dreadnought* and the rest openly waiting for him—in the offing. The shame of the disaster was enough to kill the haughty Hidalgo, to make him fall sick and turn his face to the wall and die, without Philip’s espionage and unworthy insults goading him to the grave. The *Dreadnought* had a hand in shaping the destinies of England, for, in the words of the Spanish popular saying, “to the Iron Marquis succeeded the Golden Duke,” whose hopeless incompetence gave England every chance in the next year’s fighting.

In the opening encounter with the Spanish Armada that July Sunday afternoon of 1588, no ship of all the Queen’s fleet bore herself better than did the *Dreadnought*. Captain George Beeston, of an

ancient Surrey family, held command on board the *Dreadnought*. He was a veteran officer of the Queen's fleet—more than twenty-five years had gone by since he first trod the quarter-deck as a captain. Leading in among the enemy, after the first hour of long-range firing between the English van and the Spanish rear had brought both sides to closer quarters, the *Dreadnought* with the ships that followed Drake's flagship the *Revenge*, for nearly three hours fought first with one and then with another of the most powerful of the Spanish rear-guard ships. After that, forcing their way among the Spaniards as they gave back and began to crowd on their main body, she had a sharp set-to with the big galleons, led by Juan Martinez de Recalde, perhaps the best seaman in all King Philip's navy, commander of the rear-division of the Armada. On the *Santa Ana* and her consorts the *Revenge* and *Dreadnought* and the rest made a spirited attack, pushing Recalde so hard that eventually Medina Sidonia himself, the Spanish Admiral, had to turn back and come to the rescue with every ship at his disposal. It was enough; Drake and his men had played their part. Before Medina Sidonia's advance in force, the *Revenge* and *Dreadnought* left the *Santa Ana*, and with the rest of the attacking English van drew off. They had done an excellent day's work.

There was harder work for the *Dreadnought* in the great battle of Tuesday off Portland Bill. First came the fierce brush in the morning, when Drake

and Lord Howard and the leaders of the English fleet, after a daring attempt to work in between the Spanish fleet and the Dorset coast, had to tack at the last moment, baffled for want of sea room, and were closed with by the enemy in the act of going about. On came the galleons exultantly, their crews shouting and cheering, amid a blare of trumpets and ruffle of drums, in full confidence to run down and sink the lighter built English vessels. It was a moment of extreme peril :—but at the very last, suddenly, the fortune of the day changed. As the Spaniards seemed to be upon them the wind shifted, the English sails filled, ship by ship and all together, and then stretching out with bowsprits pointing seaward, the *Revenge*, *Victory*, *Ark Royal*, *Dreadnought*, and the others safely cleared the enemy, pouring in so fierce a fire as they passed that the Spanish ships had to sheer off. This was the first fight of the day. Later, when the wind, going round with the sun, shifted again and gave Drake and Howard the weather gage, came on the most desperate encounter with the Armada that our ships had yet seen. Lord Howard in the *Ark Royal* and Drake in the *Revenge*, with the *Dreadnought*, the *Lion*, the *Victory*, and the *Mary Rose* near at hand, driving ahead before the wind, pushed into the thick of the Spanish main body, and attacked the enemy, in a long and furious battle that lasted until the afternoon sun was nearing the horizon.

A third day of battle was yet to come—Thursday's hot fight off the back of the Isle Wight, and here



again the *Dreadnought* took her full share of what was done, until the long summer day drew to its close and the Armada "gathered in a roundel," sullenly stood off eastward, proposing to fight no more until the coast of Flanders had been made.

Next morning the *Dreadnought's* captain was summoned on board Lord Howard's flagship, the *Ark Royal*. He returned "Sir George," knighted by the Lord High Admiral on the quarter-deck, in the presence of the enemy.

Sunday night saw the fireship attack, so disastrous to the Armada, and next morning followed the crowning victory of the week's campaign, the great fight off Gravelines of Monday, the 29th of July, "the great battle which, more distinctly perhaps than any battle of modern times, has moulded the history of Europe—the battle which curbed the gigantic power of Spain, which shattered the Spanish prestige and established the basis of England's empire." Here the *Dreadnought* distinguished herself again, fighting in the thick of the fray from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon, within pistol-shot of the enemy most of the time.

From six till nearly eight the ships of Drake's squadron had to bear the brunt of the fight, with, for antagonists, Medina Sidonia himself and his chief captains, who had gathered to stand by their admiral. Trying to rally the Armada after the panic of the night, this gallant band had at first, from before day-break, anchored in a group, to act as rear-guard to the Spanish fleet, firing signal guns to stop their

flying consorts, and sending pinnaces to order the fugitives back. Then Hawkins in the *Victory*, with the *Dreadnought*, the *Mary Rose*, and *Swallow*, and other ships unnamed, came up and struck in. Now moving ahead through her own smoke to plunge into the mêlée and come to the rescue of some hard-pressed consort, now working tack for tack parallel with and firing salvo after salvo at short range into some towering galleon or huge water-centipede-like galleass—so the hours of that eventful forenoon wore through on the *Dreadnought's* powder-begrimed decks. “Sir George Beeston behaved himself valiantly,” records the official *Relation of Proceedings*, drawn up for the Lord High Admiral. In vain did the most formidable of the Spanish galleons try to close and board. Ship after ship was forced back with shattered bulwarks and splintered sides, and with their scuppers spouting blood, after each English broadside, as the round shot crashed in among the masses of Spanish soldiery, packed on board the galleons as closely almost as they could stand.

More Spaniards joined their admiral as Sidonia passed north, the Spanish rear and centre squadrons forming together a long straggling array, among the ships of which, from nine to after one o'clock, the *Revenge*, *Victory*, *Dreadnought*, *Triumph*, *Ark Royal*, and the rest charged through and through fighting both broadsides. Shortly after two o'clock, the English ships passed on, pressing forward to overtake the Spanish van group of galleons. By four o'clock the battle was won, but firing went on

till nearly six, "when every man was weary with labour, and our cartridges spent and our ammunition wasted" (*i.e.* used up).

Once more the *Dreadnought* followed the fortunes of Drake's flag to battle; again, too, as Captain Fenner's ship. In the year after the Armada she had her part in escorting the Corunna expedition, the "counter-Armada," designed to beat up the quarters of the enemy at home and attempt the wresting of Portugal from the Spanish yoke. A landing party of "Dreadnoughts" fought ashore. Led by Drake and the general of the soldiers, Sir John Norris, they drove the Spaniards before them. "Unto every volly flying round their ears," says old Stow, "the generall, turning his face towards the enemy would bow and vale his bonnet, saying 'I thank you, Sir! I thank you, Sir!' to the great admiration of all his campe and of Generall Drake." The wine vaults of Corunna, however, interposed on behalf of Spain. Soldiers and sailors alike broke in and got drunk, and all that could be done after that was to reship the men and write the campaign down a failure.

In the attack on Brest in 1594, when Sir Martin Frobisher met his death, the *Dreadnought* had her share. Two years after that she fought with Essex and Raleigh in the grand attack on Cadiz—this time as one of the picked ships of Sir Walter Raleigh's own "in-shore squadron." She sailed with Sir Walter again after that in the celebrated "Islands Voyage"; and then the curtain rings down on the

memorable days of the story of the *Dreadnought* of the Great Queen's fleet. The old ship lasted afloat (after an expensive rebuild in James the First's reign) until the time of the Civil War. She figured in the interim in the Rochelle Expedition and also in one of Charles the First's Ship-money fleets. The *Dreadnought* of St. Bartholomew's Day and Matthew Baker made her last cruise of all in the year of Marston Moor.

Six *Dreadnoughts* in all have flown the pennant since England's Armada *Dreadnought* passed away.

Charles the Second's *Dreadnought* was our second man-of-war of the name. Originally the *Torrington*, one of Cromwell's frigates, and named, after the Puritan usage, to commemorate a Roundhead victory over the hapless Cavaliers, Restoration Year saw the ship re-named *Dreadnought*, under which style she rendered the State good service for many a long year to come. In that time the *Dreadnought* fought, always with credit, in no fewer than seven fleet battles. She was with the Duke of York when he beat Opdam off Lowestoft in 1665; with Monk, Duke of Albemarle, and Prince Rupert in the "Four Days' Fight" of 1666; at the defeat of De Ruyter in the St. James's Day Fight of the same year. Solebay, in the Third Dutch War, was another of our second *Dreadnought's* notable days, and also Prince Rupert's three drawn battles with De Ruyter off the Banks



"OLD DREADNOUGHT'S" DREADNOUGHT

*From the original drawing made in 1730 for the official dockyard model. Now in the Author's collection.*



of Flanders in 1673. Worn out with thirty-six years' service (reckoning from the day that the *Torrington* first took the water), the *Dreadnought* had set forth to meet the famous French corsair, Jean Bart, in the North Sea, when, one stormy October night of 1690, she foundered off the South Foreland. Happily, the boats of her squadron had time to rescue those on board.

Our fourth *Dreadnought*, William the Third's ship, fought the French at Barfleur and La Hogue, and after that did good service down to the Peace of Ryswick as a Channel cruiser and in charge of convoys. She served all through "Queen Anne's War," by chance only missing Benbow's last fight. Later, the *Dreadnought* was with the elder Byng—Lord Torrington—at the battle off Cape Passaro, in the Straits of Messina, in 1718, where one, if not two, Spaniards lowered their colours to her. The *Dreadnought* on that occasion formed one of Captain Walton's detached squadron, whose exploit history has kept on record, thanks to Captain Walton's dispatch to the admiral, as set forth in the popular version of it: "Sir, we have taken all the ships on the coast, the number as per margin." Of that dispatch more will be said elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The *Dreadnought* ended her days in George the Second's reign, at the close of the war sometimes spoken of as "The War of Jenkins' Ear."

Two *Dreadnought* officers, Sir Edward Spragge, who captained our second *Dreadnought* in the "Four

<sup>1</sup> See *post*; p. 65.

Days' Fight," and Sir Charles Wager, a very famous admiral in his day, First Lieutenant of our third *Dreadnought* in the year before La Hogue, have monuments in Westminster Abbey.

Boscawen's *Dreadnought* comes next, a sixty-gun ship built in the year 1742. She was the first ship of the line that Boscawen had the command of, and she gave him his *sobriquet* in the Navy, "Old Dreadnought," the name of his ship just hitting off the tough old salt's chief characteristic—absolute fearlessness. An incident that occurred on board the *Dreadnought* while Boscawen commanded the ship gave the *sobriquet* vogue. It is, too, a fine sample of what Carlyle calls "two o'clock in the morning courage."

It was in the year 1744, when we were at war with both France and Spain, one night when the *Dreadnought* was cruising in the channel. The officer of the watch, the story goes, came down after midnight to Captain Boscawen's cabin and awoke him, saying, "Sir, there are two large ships which look like Frenchmen bearing down on us; what are we to do?" "Do?" answered Boscawen, turning out of his cot and going on deck in his nightshirt, "Do? why, d—— 'em; fight 'em!" The fight did not come off, however, as the suspicious strangers disappeared.

On board Boscawen's *Dreadnought* it was that, fourteen years later, Nelson's uncle, Maurice Suckling, who got Nelson his first appointment in the Royal Navy, and under whose command the boy Nelson



first went to sea, made his mark as a post-captain. It was in the West Indies in 1757, the year in which Byng was shot, and the day was the 21st of October.

The *Dreadnought* with two consorts met seven French men-of-war, four of them individually bigger and more heavily gunned ships than ours, and the other three powerful frigates, and gave them a sound thrashing.

The news was received in England with exceptional gratification as the first sign of the turn of the tide since Byng's defeat off Minorca. That was one thing about it that stamped the event in popular memory. A second memorable thing was the incident, according to the popular story, of the "Half Minute Council of War" that preceded the fight.

The three British ships were the *Augusta*, Captain Forrest; the *Dreadnought*, Captain Maurice Suckling; and the *Edinburgh*, Captain Langdon. The three had been sent by the admiral at Jamaica to cruise off Cape François, in order to intercept a large French homeward merchant convoy reported to be weakly guarded. The available French naval force on the station was believed to be too weak to face our little squadron. But, unknown to Admiral Cotes at Port Royal, fresh men-of-war had just arrived from France purposely to see the convoy home. In the result, when our three ships arrived off Cape François, seven French ships stood out to meet them. In spite of the odds the British three held on their course.

These were the forces on either side, in ships and men :—

### BRITISH LINE OF BATTLE.

<i>Dreadnought</i>	60 guns	Capt. Suckling	375 men.
<i>Augusta</i>	. 60 „	Capt. Forrest	390 „
<i>Edinburgh</i>	. 64 „	Capt. Langdon	467 „
	<u>184 guns.</u>		<u>1232 men.</u>

### FRENCH LINE OF BATTLE.

<i>La Sauvage</i>	. . . .	30 guns	206 men.
<i>L'Intrépide</i> (Commodore)	. 74 „		900 „
<i>L'Opiniâtre</i>	. . . .	64 „	640 „
<i>Le Greenwich</i> (formerly British)	50 „		400 „
<i>La Licorne</i>	. . . .	30 „	200 „
<i>Le Sceptre</i>	. . . .	74 „	750 „
<i>L'Outarde</i>	. . . .	44 „	350 „
		<u>366 guns.</u>	<u>3446 men.</u>

Directly the French came in sight the senior officer, Captain Forrest of the *Augusta*, signalled to the other two captains to come on board for a council of war. They came, and, the story goes, arrived alongside the *Augusta* together and mounted the ship's side together. As they stepped on to the *Augusta's* gangway, Captain Forrest, it is related, addressed the two officers in these terms : “Gentlemen, you see the enemy are out ; shall we engage them?” “By all means,” said Captain Suckling. “It would be a pity to disappoint them,” said Captain Langdon. “Very well, then,” replied Forrest ; “will you gentlemen go back to your ships and clear for action?” The two captains bowed, and

turned and withdrew without having, as it was said, actually set foot on the senior officer's quarter-deck.

Within three-quarters of an hour they were in action, the *Dreadnought* leading in and attacking the French headmost ship as the squadrons closed. Captain Suckling opened the fight by throwing the *Dreadnought* right across the bows of the *Intrépide*, a 74, and much the bigger ship, forcing her to sheer off to port to avoid being raked.

Backed up by the *Augusta* and the *Edinburgh*, the *Dreadnought* was able to overwhelm the French commodore with her fire, and force the crippled *Intrépide* back on the next ship, the *Opiniâtre*. That vessel in turn backed into the fourth French ship, and she into another, the *Sceptre*. The four big ships of the enemy were accounted for. Our three ships seized the opportunity. Well in hand themselves, they pounded away, broadside after broadside, into the hapless Frenchmen, who were too much occupied in trying to disentangle themselves to do more than make a feeble and ineffective reply. By the time that they got clear the British squadron had so far got the upper hand that the French drew off, leaving the British squadron masters of the field. All of our three ships suffered severely, the *Dreadnought* most of all.

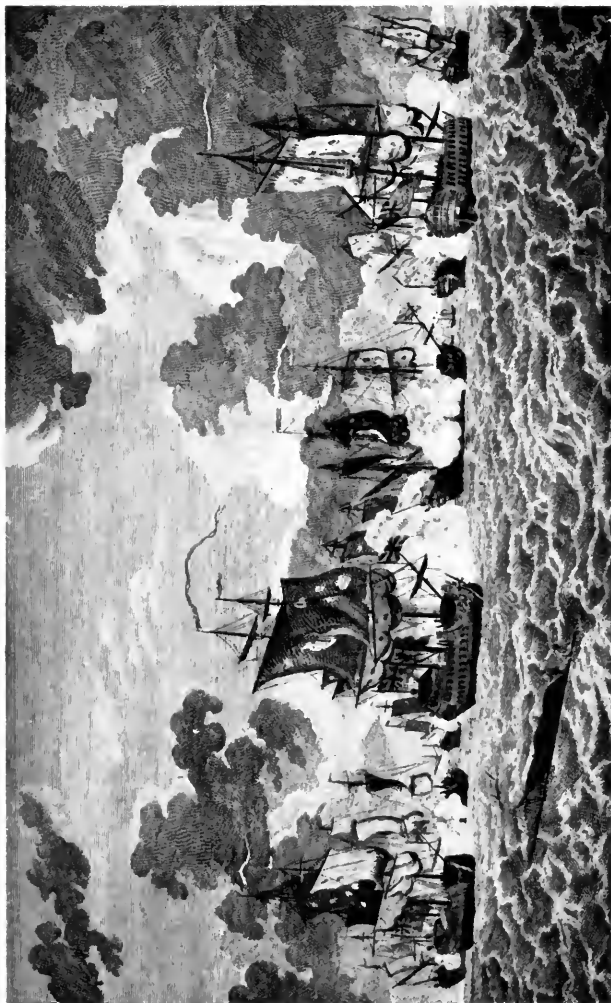
In Nelson's lifetime the day was always observed by the family at Burnham Thorpe with special festivities, and Nelson himself often called it, it is on record, "the happiest day of the year." More than that too, Nelson himself more than once

half playfully expressed his conviction that he too might some time fight a battle on another 21st of October, and make the day for the family even more of a red-letter day. As a fact, during the last three weeks of his life on board the *Victory* off Cadiz, in October, 1805, Nelson, with a prescience that the event justified, used these words both to Captain Hardy and to Dr. Beatty the surgeon of the flagship: "The 21st of October will be our day!"

Captain Maurice Suckling's "Dreadnought" sword was bequeathed to Nelson and was ever kept by him as his most treasured possession. He always wore it in battle, it is said; notably at St. Vincent, when he boarded and took the two great Spanish ships the *San Nicolas* and the *San Josef*; and his right hand was grasping it when the grape shot shattered his arm at Tenerife.

The *Dreadnought* of Boscawen and Maurice Suckling ended her days at perhaps England's darkest hour of national trial—at the time of the American War. She was doing harbour duty at Portsmouth at the time, as a guard and receiving ship.

At no period, perhaps in all our history did the future and the prospects of the British Empire seem so absolutely hopeless. We were fighting for existence against France and Spain, the two chief maritime Powers of Europe; and at the same time the vitality of the nation was being sapped by the never-ceasing struggle with the American colonists, now in its seventh year. Holland had added herself to our



*The glorious scene of Cape Mallow in 1757, between three English, seven French ships of War, in which the latter were entirely defeated.*

Ships	Capt.	French	English	Men	Gun	Wm
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100
1 English	1 English	1 English	1 English	300	30	100

"Edinburgh,"  
 "Augusta,"  
 "Dreadnought,"  
 THE RED-LETTER DAY OF NELSON'S CALENDAR, HOW THE DREADNOUGHT LED THE ATTACK ON THE 21ST OF OCTOBER, 1757  
 Painted by Swaine. Engraved and Published in 1760



foes; Russia and the Baltic Powers were banded together in a league of "armed neutrality," and stood by sullen and menacing. That, however, was not the worst. The price of naval impotence had to be paid. Great Britain was no longer mistress of the sea. She had lost command of the sea, and was drinking the bitter cup of consequent humiliation to the dregs.

It was the direct outcome of party politics and short sighted naval retrenchments in time of peace, pandering to the clamour of ministerial supporters in the House of Commons. The printed Debates and Journals of the House between 1773 and 1781 are extant, as are also the summaries of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for those who care to learn what passed.

Out-matched and out-classed at every point, the British fleet found itself held in check all the world over. Colony after colony was wrested from us, or had to be let go, while our squadrons in distant seas had not strength enough to do better than fight drawn battles.<sup>1</sup> Gibraltar, closely beset by sea and land, was still holding out, but no man dared prophesy what news of the great fortress might not

<sup>1</sup> Our West India possessions, except Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Lucia, and Antigua were lost; and the four named were about to be attacked when Rodney's victory saved them. Demerara, our West African settlements, Trincomalee and Ceylon, Minorca, and the American Colonies went also—all because the Ministry of the day refused to keep the Fleet up to the "Two Power standard" of those times, "superior to the combined forces of the House of Bourbon," *i.e.* France and Spain, who had the two next powerful fleets after Great Britain. In cash, the war cost England £200,000,000.

arrive next. Minorca, England's other Mediterranean possession, had to surrender. The enemy were masters of the island, after driving the garrison into their last defences at St. Philip's Castle. Nearer home, Ireland, in the enjoyment of Home Rule, was using the hour of Great Britain's difficulty as her opportunity for demanding practical independence, with eighty thousand Irish volunteers under arms to back up the threats of the Dublin Parliament.

The Channel Fleet, though reinforced with every ship it was possible to find crews for, held the Channel practically on sufferance. Once it had to retreat before the enemy and seek refuge at Spithead. On another occasion the enemy were on the point of attacking it in Torbay with such preponderance of force that overwhelming disaster must have befallen it. Fortunately for England the French and Spanish admirals disagreed at the last moment and turned back.

Hanging in a frame on the walls of the Musée de Marine at the Louvre the English visitor to Paris to-day may see a draft original "State," giving the official details of the divisions and brigades and the ships to escort them, of one of the French armies which was to be thrown across into England. It was no empty menace, and for three years the beacons along our south and east coasts had to be watched nightly ; while camps of soldiers, horse and foot and artillery—the few regulars that had not been sent off to America—with all the militia regi-



ments in the kingdom, extended all the way round, at points, from Caithness to Cornwall. To safeguard London there were camps of from eight to ten battalions each, mostly militia, at Coxheath, near Maidstone, at Dartford, at Warley, at Danbury in Essex, and at Tiptree Heath. To secure the colliery shipping of the Tyne two militia battalions were under canvas near Gateshead. A camp at Dunbar and Haddington watched over Edinburgh. The West Country was guarded by a big camp of fifteen militia battalions at Roborough, near Plymouth, with an outlying camp on Buckland Down, near Tavistock. To prevent the enemy making use of Torbay, Berry Head was fortified, the ruins of the old Roman camp of Vespasian's legionaries there being utilized to build two twenty-four pounder batteries overlooking the passage into the bay. Every town almost throughout England had its "Armed Association" or "Fencibles," volunteers, the men of which, by special permission from the Archbishop of Canterbury, drilled after church time every Sunday.

The effect on the oversea commerce of the country, penalized by excessive insurance rates, was calamitous. From 25 to 30 per cent premium was paid at Lloyds on cargoes from Bristol, Liverpool, and Glasgow to New York (still in British hands); and 20 per cent to the West Indies. As to the reality of the risk. On one occasion the enemy captured an Indiaman fleet bodily off Madeira, only eight vessels out of sixty-three escap-

ing, with a loss to Great Britain of a million and a half sterling, including £300,000 in specie. We have, indeed, at this moment a daily reminder of the disaster. One of the unfortunate underwriters was a Mr. John Walter. His whole fortune swept away, he took to journalism, and the *Times* newspaper was the result. Home waters were hardly more secure. Rather than pay the excessive extra premium demanded for the voyage up Channel, London merchants had their goods unladen at Bristol, and carried in light flat-bottomed craft called "runners," built specially for the traffic, up the Severn to Gloucester, thence to be carted across to Lechlade for conveyance to their destination by barge down the Thames. At the same time the North Sea packets from Edinburgh (Grangemouth) to London refused all passengers who would not undertake to assist in the defence of the vessel in emergency. Printed notices were pasted up at the wharves announcing that no Quakers would be carried.

To such a pass had the loss of her supremacy at sea reduced Great Britain in the closing year of our fourth *Dreadnought's* career.

Our fifth *Dreadnought* fought at Trafalgar. She was a 98-gun ship, one of the same set as the famous "fighting" *Téméraire*. The newspapers of the day made a good deal of her launch, which took place at Portsmouth Dockyard, on Saturday, the 13th of June, 1801. Here is an extract from one account:—

"At about twelve o'clock this fine ship, which has



*Thomas Rowlandson.*

1786.

WHEN GEORGE THE THIRD WAS KING. OFFICERS AT AFTERNOON TEA ASHORE



*James Gillray.*

Oct. 15, 1779.

MANNING THE FLEET IN 1779. A WARM CORNER FOR THE PRESS GANG



been thirteen years upon the stocks, was launched from the dockyard with all the naval splendour that could possibly be given to aid the grandeur and interest of the spectacle. She was decorated with an Ensign, Jack, Union, and the Imperial Standard, and had the marine band playing the distinguished martial pieces of 'God save the King,' 'Rule Britannia,' etc. etc. A prodigious concourse of persons, to the amount, as is supposed, of at least 10,000, assembled, and were highly delighted by the magnificence of the ship and the beautiful manner in which she entered the watery element. But what afforded great satisfaction was, that, in the passage of this immense fabric from the stocks, not a single accident happened. She was christened by Commissioner Sir Charles Saxton, who, as usual, broke a bottle of wine over her stem. Her complement of guns is to be 98, and she has the following significant emblem at her head; viz.—a lion couchant on a scroll containing the imperial arms as emblazoned on the Standard. This is remarkably well timed and adapted to her as being the first man-of-war launched since the Union of the British Isles."

For twelve months before Trafalgar, the *Dreadnought* was Collingwood's flagship in the Channel Fleet. Collingwood passed most of the time cruising on blockade duty in the Bay of Biscay, where he used to spend his nights pacing on deck to and fro restlessly, expecting the enemy at any moment, and snatching intervals of sleep lying down on a gun-carriage on the quarter-deck. Collingwood

only changed from her into the bigger *Royal Sovereign* ten days before the battle. Under the eye of the former captain of our first *Excellent* man-of-war, the *Dreadnought's* men had been trained to fire three broadsides in one minute and a half—a gunnery record for that day.

At Trafalgar the *Dreadnought* fought as one of the ships in Collingwood's line, and did the best with what opportunity came her way.

"This quiet old *Dreadnought*," wrote Dickens of his visit to the ship in her last years, "whose fighting days are all over—*sans* guns, *sans* shot, *sans* shells, *sans* everything—did fight at Trafalgar under Captain Conn—did figure as one of the hindmost ships in the column which Collingwood led—went into action about two in the afternoon, and captured the *San Juan* in fifteen minutes."

While fighting the *San Juan*—the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, a Spanish seventy-four—the *Dreadnought* had to keep off two other Spaniards and a Frenchman at the same time; Admiral Gravina's flagship, the *Principe de Asturias*, of 112 guns, and the *San Justo* and *Indomptable*, two seventy-fours. The *San Juan* in the end proved an easy prize, for she had been already severely mauled by some of Collingwood's leading ships. On being run alongside of she gave in quickly. Without staying to take possession, the *Dreadnought* pushed on to close with the big *Principe de Asturias*, and gave her several broadsides, one shot from which mortally wounded Admiral Gravina. The Spanish three-

decker, however, managed to disengage, and made off, to lead the escaping ships in their flight for Cadiz. Thus the *Dreadnought* was baulked of her big prize.

It was the Trafalgar *Dreadnought* that gave the name to that great international institution, the *Dreadnought* Seamen's Hospital, at Greenwich. This, of course, was long after Trafalgar, for the "wooden whopper of the Thames," as Dickens called the old three-decker in her old age, did not make her appearance off Greenwich until a quarter of a century later. The fine old veteran of "Eighteen Hundred and War Time," lasted until 1857, and to the end they preserved on board as the special relic of interest, "a piece of glass from a cabin skylight scrawled over, with somebody's diamond ring, with the names of those officers who were in her at Trafalgar." Another old three-decker replaced the Trafalgar ship until 1870, when the institution was removed on shore. At Chatham to-day, in the dockyard museum, visitors may see the *Dreadnought's* bell which was on board the old ship during the battle, and was removed from her when the *Dreadnought* was broken up. Yet another memento of the Trafalgar *Dreadnought* exists in the Eton eight-oar *Dreadnought*, one of the "Lower Boats," and so-called originally, together with the boat that bears the name *Victory*, in honour of Nelson and Trafalgar.

Our sixth *Dreadnought* is a still existing ironclad turret-ship, mounting four 38-ton muzzle loaders,

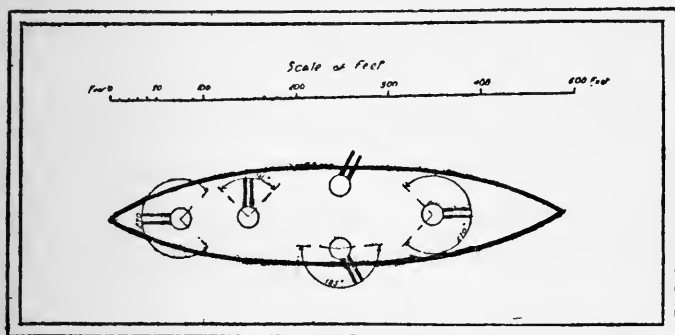
launched in 1875. She is a ship of 10,820 tons, and cost to complete for sea £619,739. She served for ten years—from 1884 to 1894—in the Mediterranean, and after that as a coast-guard ship in Bantry Bay. Paid off finally in 1905, the *Dreadnought* now lies at her last moorings in the Kyles of Bute, awaiting the final day of all for her naval career, and the auctioneer's hammer.

To conclude with a flying glance at our mighty battleship, the *Dreadnought* of to-day, the seventh bearer of the name until now, and as all the world knows by far the most powerful man-of-war that has ever sailed the seas. She is the biggest and the heaviest and the fastest and the hardest-hitting vessel that any navy as yet has seen afloat. And more than that. The *Dreadnought* has been so built as to be practically unsinkable by mine or torpedo; while at the same time her tremendous battery of ten 12-in. guns—huge cannon, each forty-five feet long—makes her absolutely irresistible in battle against all comers; a match for any two—probably any three—of the biggest battleships in foreign navies afloat at the present hour.

These are some of the “points”—some of the leading features—of this grim *mastodonte de mer* of ours, His Majesty's battleship, the *Dreadnought*. With her coal, ammunition, and sea stores on board, the *Dreadnought* weighs—or displaces in equivalent bulk of sea water, according to the present-day method of reckoning the size of men-of-war—17,800 tons.



Put the *Dreadnought* bodily inside St. Paul's and she would fill the whole nave and chancel of the Cathedral from reredos to the Western doors. Her length would take up the whole of one side of Trafalgar Square. Her width would exactly fill Northumberland Avenue, leaving only some half-dozen inches between the house fronts on either side and the outside of the hull. Two *Victories* and a frigate



[Our *Dreadnought* of to-day: deck-plan to scale; showing the disposition of the 12-in. 58-ton turret-guns and their arcs of training. (Bows to the right.)]<sup>1</sup>

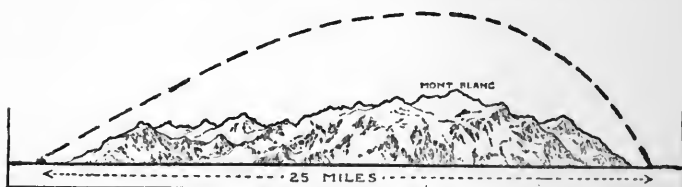
of Nelson's day, fully manned and rigged, could be packed away within the *Dreadnought's* hull.

Measured from end to end, from bows to stern, the ship's hull extends 490 feet. From forecastle to keel, measuring vertically, is a matter of some 60 feet down, equivalent to about the normal height of a church tower.

What, however, above everything else, specially

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Graphic* for permission to reproduce the diagrams here given.

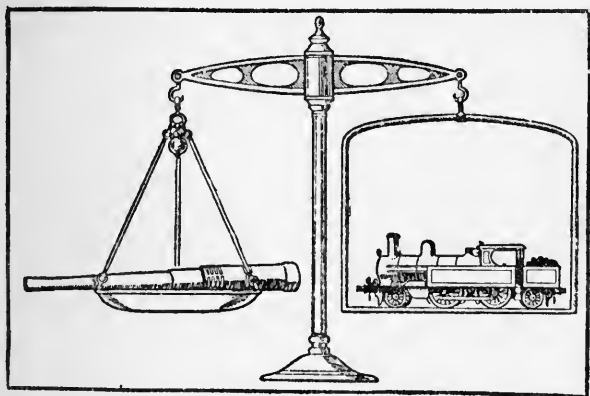
distinguishes the *Dreadnought* from all other war-ships afloat, is her terrific battery. Hitherto four 12-inch guns have formed the standard main armament for all battleships. The *Dreadnought* carries ten 12-inch guns of a new and more powerful type than any heretofore in existence. They are mounted in pairs in "redoubts," armoured with Krupp steel eleven inches thick, and are so grouped on board that when fighting broadside-on with an enemy, eight of the ten guns will bear on the enemy and be in action throughout. In chase, or fighting end-on,



[Curve of flight, or trajectory, of 850 lb. projectile from a *Dreadnought* 12-in. turret-gun fired with full service charge.]

six of the guns are available at all times. The firing charge per gun of "modified" cordite weighs by itself 2 cwt.—the weight of a sack of coals on a street coal-cart. In the hour of battle each discharge from the *Dreadnought's* broadside will hurl into the enemy three tons of "metal"—bursting shells—each shell being from three to four feet long, and weighing singly  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. With each shot also, bang goes £80, the cost of the cartridge and its projectile. Twelve thousand yards will be the *Dreadnought's* chosen range for engaging—six miles—about as far as clear vision is possible above the horizon.

"Mark X" is the official style for the *Dreadnought* class of 12-inch gun. It is the most powerful piece of ordnance in the world. It weighs upwards of fifty-eight tons, about the weight of a larger "tank" railway engine of the kind that brings the suburban bread-winner up to London every morning. Its muzzle velocity—the speed at which the shot flashes forth from the gun—is 2900 feet ( $966\frac{2}{3}$  yards, or well

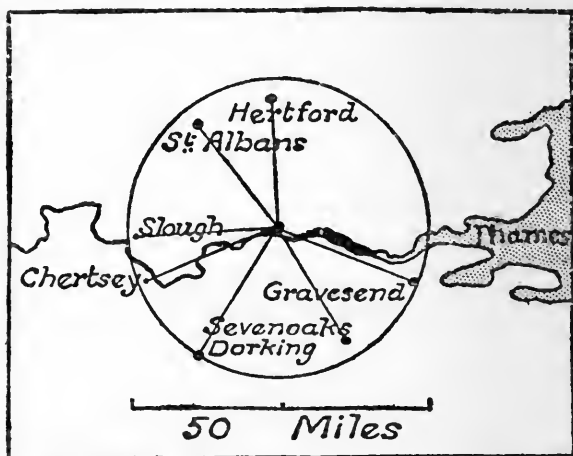


[The 12-in. gun is about the same weight as an ordinary railway passenger train engine.]

over half a mile) in a second. The force with which the shot starts off is enough to send it through a solid slab of wrought iron set close up in front of the muzzle of the gun  $4\frac{1}{4}$  feet thick. When fired with full charges, each gun develops a force able to lift the *Dreadnought* herself bodily nearly a yard up, exerting a force equivalent to 47,697 "foot-tons," in gunnery language. The entire broadside of eight 12-inch guns, fired simultaneously, as at the gun

trial off the Isle of Wight, develops a force sufficient to heave the huge vessel herself, 21 feet up—nearly out of the water, in fact.

As an instance of the tremendous range of the *Dreadnought's* guns: mounted on one of the Dover forts, they could easily drop shells on the deck of a Channel packet in the act of leaving Calais harbour.



[Extreme range of the *Dreadnought's* turret-guns:—Fired from in front of St. Paul's Cathedral.]

Imagine one of them mounted in front of St. Paul's and firing with full charges in any direction. Its shells would burst over Slough in one direction and over Gravesend in the other. Hertford, St. Albans, Chertsey, Sevenoaks, would all be within range. Twenty-five miles is the extreme estimated range of a shot fire with a full service charge, and the trajectory of the projectile would, at its culminat-

ing point, attain a height in the air of nearly six miles, twice the height of Mont Blanc.

They are "wire guns," as the term goes, constructed in each case by winding coil on coil of steel ribbon or "tape" (a quarter of an inch wide and '06 of an inch thick), round and round on an inner steel tube, the barrel of the piece; just as the string is wound round the handle of a cricket bat. The tape or "wire" is then covered by outer "jackets," or tubes of steel. Upwards of 228,800 yards of wire—a length of 130 miles—weighing some 15 tons, are required for each of the *Dreadnought's* 12-inch guns, and it takes from three to four weeks to wind on the wire. The rifling of the barrel comprises forty-eight grooves, varying in depth from '08 of an inch at the muzzle to '1 at the breech. Each of the *Dreadnought's* guns, separately, employs in its manufacture from first to last upwards of five hundred men in various capacities, and costs, as turned out ready to send on board, but without sighting and other vital appliances, between £10,000 and £11,000.

The *Dreadnought* carries eleven inches of Krupp steel armour on her sides, turrets, and conning tower, and rather thinner armour at the bows and stern. Her speed of twenty-one knots makes her a full two knots faster than any existing battleship. She is the first battleship in any navy to be propelled by the Parsons turbine, to which her speed is due. Lastly, the cost of the *Dreadnought* is officially stated at £1,797,497.

Exceptional in themselves, and of exceptional historic interest as well, are the honours that have fallen to the *Dreadnought's* lot within the few months that our great naval masterpiece has been in existence.

At the outset the *Dreadnought* had the good fortune to be named and sent afloat by His Majesty King Edward personally. That in itself was an exceptional honour, and one that has fallen to the lot of very few ships of the Royal Navy—to be named and sent afloat by the reigning sovereign. There have been just six instances in all, from the earliest times to the present day. Queen Victoria launched four men-of-war during her long reign ; but no King of England ever launched a ship in the four hundred years between King Edward and Henry the Eighth: King Edward with the *Dreadnought* and Henry the Eighth with the *Great Harry* are the two historic instances. Many of our sovereigns, of course—practically all of them: Edward the Sixth, Queen Elizabeth, the Stuart kings, Cromwell also, George the Third, and William the Fourth—attended in state on various occasions to witness the launch of some notable man-of-war, but they were present only as spectators, and took no part in the actual proceedings. Charles the First was to have personally named the famous *Sovereign of the Seas*, with the same ceremonial used at the launch of our first *Dreadnought*, and rode down with his Court to Woolwich to do so ; but they could not get the ship out of dock, and the King rode back to Whitehall

disappointed, deputing the Lord High Admiral to name the ship when she did get clear—not till between eight and nine in the evening. Charles the Second, in like manner, was to have personally named our first *Britannia*, but His Majesty was taken ill on the day before. Again too, as it also happened, there was a hitch at the launch. The *Britannia* stuck fast for twelve hours, and then went off at midnight to the flare of torches and cressets, after which a courier was hurried off at gallop to Whitehall, to acquaint the King, “lest certain base reports (i.e. that the *Britannia* had fallen over in dock) may have reached your Majesty.”

Yet another exceptional honour that befel the *Dreadnought* was after the great review of the Home Fleet off Cowes, on the first Monday of August this year, when King Edward, with Queen Alexandra, the Prince of Wales, and Prince Edward of Wales, with Sir John Fisher and members of the Royal suite, went out on board the *Dreadnought* to beyond Spithead to witness target-practice with the *Dreadnought's* turret-guns; the memorable occasion on which, at 2640 yards' range, the four 12-in. guns that fired, scored within two and a half minutes nine bull's-eyes and two “outers” out of twelve rounds discharged. Never to be forgotten was the scene as the *Dreadnought* passed down the double lines of the Home Fleet in the brilliant sunshine; the ships all dressed with flags, and with decks manned, and cheering, and firing salutes—the giant ship herself flying the Royal Standard at the masthead and at

either yard-arm the Union Flag, symbol of His Majesty's rank as Admiral of the Fleet, and the Admiralty Anchor Flag, a combination not seen on board a British man-of-war of the fighting-line, even in those historic waters, for over a century—not, indeed, since that summer's morning of 1794, when the three flags flew together at the mastheads of the famous *Queen Charlotte*, denoting King George the Third's presence on board, with his Queen, on his visit to present a diamond-hilted sword of honour to Lord Howe, then just arrived with the prizes taken on the Glorious First of June. That also was the last occasion, until the other day, on which a King and Queen of England were together on board a British man-of-war at sea.

The guns fired before the King and Queen were those in the two after-turrets, and the targets used were the usual service ones, 16 ft. by 20 ft., with a central bull's-eye 14 ft. square. The range was about a mile and a half, and six rounds were fired from each turret. Of the three shots placed outside the bull's-eye, two went through the target, whilst the third, which missed, cut away the rope fastening the canvas of the target to the framework. Two of the shots in the bull's-eye went through the very centre, through a small circle, about thirty inches in diameter, marked in the middle of the target.

We will conclude this outline of our *Dreadnoughts'* story with a brief tabular statement of certain points in detail of comparison and contrast between the *Dreadnought* of to-day and the historic *Victory*.



## THE *DREADNOUGHT* AND *VICTORY* COMPARED

	<i>DREADNOUGHT.</i>	<i>VICTORY.</i>
Time Building.	16 months	Five years ten months
Total Cost	£1,797,497	£89,000.
Displacement	17,900 tons	3400 tons.
Total Weight Broadside	6800 lb.	1160 lb.
Extreme Range of Guns	25 miles	3 miles.
Penetration of ar- mour at six miles	{ 9 in. Krupp Steel }	Penetration at all distances } Nil.
Heaviest Gun	12 inch	6 inch.
Weight of Charge	265 lb. (M.D. cordite).	10½ lb. (gunpowder).
Time to make Gun	{ 12 to 15 months }	Four guns a week.
Cost per Gun	£11,000	£57. 15s.
Average Weight per Gun	58 tons	56 cwt.
Complement	780 men	850 men.
Length	490 ft.	226 ft. 6 in.
Breadth	82 ft.	52 ft.
Mean Load Draught	26 ft. 6 in.	25 ft.
Number of Guns	37	104
Speed	21½ knots	10 knots.

## II

### "KENT CLAIMS THE FIRST BLOW!"

"*The Kentishe Menne in Front!*"

"**K**ENT claims for itself the first blow in battle against alien enemies." The hand that penned these words has lain in the grave for over seven centuries; but old William Fitz-Stephen of Canterbury knew what he meant, and meant what he wrote. They are words that our fine "county cruiser" the *Kent* of to-day—to which the ladies of Kent have presented a silken battle flag and the Men of Kent a silver shield and other gifts, to incite the *Kent's* blue-jackets to shoot straight—might well adopt and make the ship's motto. It was from the County of Kent that the initiative came in the movement which has had such excellent results in inducing the county people in other counties all over Great Britain and Ireland to display a practical interest in the warships that bear the county names; and the idea has since spread in other cases throughout the Empire.

The county "Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men" of their own accord took the initial

step in the spring of 1899 by approaching the late Lord Goschen, then First Lord of the Admiralty, with a request that one of four cruisers of a new type, to be built under the supplemental programme of the previous August, might be named after the County of Kent. The request was heartily received, and in response the name *Kent* was announced for the first of the new ships. A little later the Men of Kent made a second proposal. They asked permission to establish among themselves a "county memorial for the new county-cruiser *Kent*," expressing their "desire and intention to do something to keep up a continual connection between the county and the good ship, and to cause a sustained interest to be taken in her fortunes and the welfare of those on board." Lord Goschen acceded to that request, and a county subscription was immediately set on foot by Lord Harris, the president of the Association for the year, to form a Kent county trophy fund for the cruiser *Kent*. It was proposed to present the ship, on commissioning, with a challenge trophy in silver, to be competed for annually among the gun crews of the ship, the champion gun team for each year to have their names inscribed on the trophy and receive a special monetary reward from a county fund established with the trophy. The trophy itself was to be kept on board and to be displayed on special and festive occasions in the mess of the winning team. Whenever the *Kent* was out of commission the trophy would be cared for by the Captain of the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham, or at Greenwich

Naval College.<sup>1</sup> The movement received cordial support from Lord Selborne, Lord Goschen's successor at the Admiralty, and from the late Earl Stanhope, the then Lord Lieutenant of Kent, and the late Lord Salisbury, then Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. More than that, indeed. Interested by the patriotic action taken by the County of Kent on behalf of its cruiser namesake, His Majesty the King was himself graciously pleased to command that in the cases of future ships bearing the names of counties the Lords Lieutenant of the counties concerned were to be requested by the Admiralty to nominate in each case some lady connected with the county to perform the naming and launching ceremony.

The trophy-shield subscribed for by the Men of Kent, together with an album for the names and scores of its winners from time to time, was formally

<sup>1</sup> The Kent Trophy Challenge Shield, of which an illustration is given, is of silver. In the centre chief point appears a representation of H.M.S. *Kent*, taken from a drawing supplied by the Admiralty. This is embossed and oxydized. It is surmounted by an enamelled shield, bearing the Arms of the Association of "Men of Kent and Kentish Men." Underneath the ship, entwined with branches of laurel, are scrolls to take the names of the Officers Commanding. The lower part of shield shows the arms and motto of the County of Kent, while turrets with protruding guns form an artistic background. Below is a large ornamental tablet displaying the presentation inscription, and round the edge of the shield flows a beautifully modelled pattern of Kentish Hops, Cherries, Oakleaves, and Cob-nuts, each spray of which is separately modelled and bent into position, forming an excellent contrast with the white and burnished groundwork shield. The whole is mounted on a stout polished-oak shield, size 2 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft., and surrounded by thirty silver wreath-medallions, to be inscribed each year with the name of the winning gun-crew's captain. The total weight of silver used is 146 ozs.



THE COUNTY AND ITS SHIP. THE KENT TROPHY CHALLENGE SHIELD  
 From a photograph kindly lent by the Designers and Manufacturers of the Trophy, Messrs.  
 George Kenning & Son, Goldsmiths, Little Britain and Aldersgate Street, London.



handed over to the captain and ship's company of the *Kent* at Sheerness by representatives of the County Association, the gift being received with every mark of regard and genuine welcome. Following on that, a deputation of county ladies, headed by the Countess Stanhope, the wife of the Lord Lieutenant, presented the favoured ship with two flags, a beautiful silken ensign and a silken Union Jack, subscribed for by the County Association of "Maids of Kent and Kentish Maids." The flags were brought on board in the beautiful box of Kentish Heart of Oak in which they are now kept under the sentry before the captain's cabin. The ensign was bent on the hal-yards and ceremoniously hoisted to the peak by Countess Stanhope in the presence of the assembled officers and crew of the *Kent*, and the Jack was hoisted by the Hon. Secretary of the Ladies' Committee, Mrs. Bills, the proceedings winding up with a luncheon to the ladies on the after-deck by Captain Gamble and his officers, and an afternoon dance on board.

That the name of the ancient maritime county of England should be borne in the fleet to-day by a modern British warship is in itself a matter of historic interest. There are, indeed, very excellent reasons why the County of Kent should receive distinguished treatment from the Admiralty, why its name deserves to be honourably commemorated in the British fleet of to-day.

Kent has a place of its own in regard to the naval annals of England, old-time associations with the oversea defence of England and the national navy, that stand quite by themselves. The associations indeed go back across fifteen centuries, to the earliest days of our "rough island story"; so far back, indeed, as the old old times of the "Counts of the Saxon Shore."

Dover and Reculver, the two principal Kentish ports of the days when Britain was a Roman province, were central stations in the widespread line of outposts along the coast whence watch and ward were kept for the coming of the Norseland raiders oversea in the springtime year by year.

Bared to the sun and soft, warm air,  
Streams back the Norseman's yellow hair,  
I see the gleam of axe and spear,  
The sound of smitten shields I hear,  
Keeping a harsh, barbaric time  
To Saga's chant and Runic rhyme.

From the pharos on the Foreland in those strenuous times of long ago keen-sighted men of Kent kept look-out daily, scanning the horizon from sunrise to sunset; ever on the alert to start the alarm and pass it on to where the Roman coast defence galleys lay at their moorings off the mouth of the Wantsum Channel by Richborough Castle.

Alike on land and sea theirs was the post of honour. At Hastings, led by the stout Earl Leofwine, as we know—

A standard made of sylke and jewells rare  
Was borne near Harold at the Kenters Head.

And centuries after that, whenever the King of Eng-



land was in the field, they claimed the right to lead the van—"The Kentishe Menne in front!"

The Kentish contingent—the "Eastern Ports" contingent—formed the bulk and the backbone of the Cinque Ports fleets of the Middle Ages, both in ships and men. Four of the five "Head Ports" in the famous confederation were Kentish ports—Sandwich, Dover, Romney, and Hythe. The "Eastern Ports" counted twenty-one limbs, "Members"; the "Western Ports"—Hastings with the two "Ancient Towns" attached—ten "Members." The old Cinque Ports Navy, in these times of ours it may be, is little more than a name, a faded memory of a dim and distant past, a perished institution of a dead old time; yet it was once an actual fact, a living hot-blooded reality, the chief guarantee of our national existence, a very real bulwark, the foremost defence of England from foreign invasion. "The courage of those sailors who manned the rude barks of the Cinque Ports first made the flag of England terrible on the seas." For all that we have to thank, in the first place, the Men of Kent, that Kent of which old twelfth-century Fitz-Stephen, monk of Canterbury and historian of his own times, was thinking when he wrote, "Kent claims for itself the first blow in battle against alien enemies."

The Kentish ships of the Cinque Ports, "Ships of Kent" they are explicitly called, took a leading part with the Crusaders' fleet which on its way to the Holy Land for the Second Crusade, in the year 1147, captured Lisbon from the Moors. Kentish men

fought with that fine leader, William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, "Warden of the Cinque," when he fell on the French King's fleet at Damme—just three years before King John put his mark to Magna Charta.

It was a squadron of the Kentish ships of the Ports' federation that, in the year after Magna Charta, under one of England's finest heroes and greatest men, that grand fellow, stout-hearted Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, Chief Justiciar of England and Constable of Dover Castle, Cœur de Lion's favourite pupil in arms, saved England from invasion by rounding up the fleet with which the renegade leader Eustace the Monk—"pirata nequissimus" one old chronicler calls him—was making for the Thames, and dealing the French the first of the series of knock-down blows of which Nelson struck the last at Trafalgar. The story of the "Battle of Bartholomew's Day," the 24th of August, 1217, is one we ought not willingly to let die. There is hardly a finer tale in all our history than that which tells how De Burgh's sixteen Cinque Port warships from Dover, with nineteen or twenty small craft, stood out to meet the Monk's hundred and odd ships—eighty of them the largest vessels of the time—off the North Foreland; swept round them astern, weathered them and closed, grappled them fast, under cover of a stinging fire of archery and cross-bow bolts, cut down their sails, and then, flinging up in the air handfuls of quicklime to blow into the faces of the Frenchmen, boarded and overpowered

the enemy in hand-to-hand fight with falchion and pike and battle-axe. They fought it out from early morning until the afternoon was spent, when fifty-five ships of the Monk's fleet had been taken, and the rest, except fifteen ships that ran away, all sent to the bottom.

Again, in the tremendous Midsummer Day's battle in the harbour of Sluys, the "Trafalgar of the Middle Ages," although to most people the event is barely a schoolbook memory—the great naval victory that made Crécy possible—once more the Ship-and-Lion flag at the masthead of vessels from the four Kent ports was to the fore, well up in the van of King Edward's attacking fleet and in the thickest of the fighting. And at the battle of "Espagnols-sur-Mer," off Winchelsea, where again Edward the Third fought in person, together with the Black Prince; off St. Mahé; and at Harfleur, covering Henry the Fifth's landing for the march that ended at Agincourt, and in many another hard-fought action in the Narrow Seas after that, Kentish men in the Kentish ships of the Ports' Navy full well played their part.

It was oak from the Weald of Kent for the most part that built the men-of-war of Queen Elizabeth's fleet which drove the Spanish Armada through the Channel and North Sea to its doom on the reefs of Stornaway and the quicksands of Connemara—ships timbered and planked with oak from the Kentish Weald, and shaped and framed and clamped together in the Kentish Dockyards of Deptford and Wool-

wich. Phineas Pett, a Kentish man by birth, designed and built the famous *Sovereign of the Seas*; and his grandson, Sir Phineas Pett, designed and built our first *Britannia*. The *Great Harry* was mostly built of Kentish oak; as was, at a later day, Sir Richard Grenville's "little" *Revenge*, and, at a still later day, Nelson's *Victory*, launched at Chatham.

It was a Man of Kent who, as admiral in chief command, planned and gave the order for the capture of Gibraltar. It was another Man of Kent who, as admiral second in command, carried that order out. Sir George Rooke, one of the Rookes of Monk's Horton, Kent—by far the ablest sea-officer in the British service in the hundred years between Blake and Hawke—was the Commander-in-Chief before Gibraltar. Byng, Sir George Byng, was the second in command—the elder of the two Byngs known to naval history, "Mediterranean Byng," as he was called in the Navy in connection with a later exploit of his, and remembered nowadays as the Byng who beat the enemy and was not shot. He became Lord Viscount Torrington, and may, in like manner, be distinguished from the other Lord Torrington of naval history (Arthur Herbert) as the Torrington who beat the enemy and was not court-martialled and broke.

A famous family of old-time Kent were the Byngs, seated at Wrotham ever since the fifteenth century, more than one member of which came to the front

in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuart kings. Such as, for instance, the fine old Kentish cavalier of Browning's rousing song :

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,  
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing,  
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop  
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,  
     Marched them along,  
     Fifty score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song !

Fifty score strong ! Fifty score strong !  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song !

Other Kentish men of note associated directly with the Old Navy were Sir Thomas Spert, founder of Trinity House, and captain of the *Harry Grace à Dieu* when Henry the Eighth crossed the Straits of Dover in her to the Field of the Cloth of Gold ; Sir William Hervey, of Kidbrooke, "who greatly distinguished himself in boarding one of the vessels composing the Spanish Armada," and was raised to the peerage as Lord Hervey ; old Captain Dick Fogg, of Repton, near Ashford, captain under Charles the First of the tenth whelp and the *Victory* and of other men-of-war of note ; Kit Fogg, his son, who fought for England in half a score of sea-fights under Charles the Second and down to the time of Queen Anne ; Christopher Gunman, a bold fireship and frigate captain in the Dutch wars, captain of the Duke of York's flagship at Solebay, who later on nearly drowned the future James the Second ; George Legge, afterwards the Earl of Dartmouth, whose valour in battle at Solebay made

his fortune, a member of a Kent county family of long descent ; two notable Commodores, two St. Lo's of Northfleet ; Commodore Boys of the *Luxborough* galley ; Sir Piercey Brett, who as a lieutenant went round the world with Anson, and lived to be one of the most distinguished officers of his day ; Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson, who fought under Nelson at Teneriffe, at the Nile, and at Copenhagen. These are a few names taken at random.

Sir Sidney Smith, the "Hero of Acre," the man who made Bonaparte, as the Emperor himself put it, "miss his destiny," was of Kentish birth and family, and learned his "three R's" at Tunbridge School ; and it was to Lord Barham, as First Lord of the Admiralty, that Nelson reported himself in September, 1805, when he volunteered to shorten his leave at home and go out at once to fight the enemy at Trafalgar.

It was Kent, too, that gave England Captain John Harvey—one of the Harveys of Eastrey, a family that for generations had sent its sons into the Navy—captain of the *Brunswick* on Lord Howe's famous day, the "Glorious First of June," 1794, who fell mortally wounded in close action with the French *Vengeur*. When the two ships first collided, the master of the *Brunswick* proposed to cut the *Vengeur* clear. "No," answered Captain Harvey ; "we've got her, and we'll keep her !" After he received his mortal wound he refused to let himself be carried off the quarter-deck. He dragged himself down to the cockpit, saying as he went off the

deck, "Remember my last words: the colours of the *Brunswick* must never be struck!" A brother, Henry Harvey, was the admiral whose name is still to be met with on old tavern signboards here and there in East Kent. Henry Harvey, captain of the *Ramillies*, came to his brother's aid on the 1st of June, and with three terrific broadsides finished off the *Vengeur* for the *Brunswick*, amid resounding cheers from the *Brunswick's* men, and giving occasion to an officer in another ship who was looking on to improvise on King David: "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to fight together in unity!"

It was this same Henry Harvey who, as a rear-admiral, later in the Great War (in 1797), took Trinidad. That the conquest proved an easy business was not his fault. The Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish squadron at Trinidad, Admiral Apodoca, when he saw Admiral Harvey coming, without clearing for action or firing a shot set fire to his ships and escaped ashore. He took horse and galloped off, and presented himself, excited and panting with his exertions, before the Governor of the island, General Chacon. "I have burnt my ships, sir," he burst in with, "in case they should fall into the power of the English." "Burnt them?" exclaimed the astonished Governor; "destroyed them! Have you saved nothing?" "Oh, yes I have!" Apodoca replied. "Yes I have! I have! I have saved"—drawing a carved and painted wooden image, some fifteen inches long, from under his cloak as he spoke

—"my flagship's patron saint—I have saved San Juan de Compostella!" That Apodoca's flagship was the *San Vincente*, and that there was no *San Juan de Compostella* on the Spanish Navy List at the time, are details the story does not concern itself with.

Yet another interesting connection between Kent and the sea service of bygone times is this. H.M.S. *Kent's* name is not the only man-of-war name associated with the county that has figured in the fighting days of old. No fewer than eighteen other man-of-war names connected with the county of Kent have from time to time been borne on the roll of the British fleet. It was on board a *Canterbury* that a notable naval officer of the earlier part of the eighteenth century, Captain George Walton, penned words which have been quoted over and over again as a masterpiece of conciseness. He had been in pursuit of a Spanish squadron, and on his return, as most of us have read, reported as follows:—

*"To Admiral Sir George Byng, Commander-in-Chief.*

"Sir,

"We have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels which were upon the coast, as per margin.

"I am, etc.,

"GEORGE WALTON.



“Canterbury, off Syracuse,

“August 16, 1718.

“One of 60 guns, one of 54, one of 40, one of 24—taken; one of 54, two of 40, one of 30 guns, with a fireship and two bomb vessels—burnt.”

As a fact, unfortunately, Captain Walton's “dispatch” was written in quite another way. The captain of the *Canterbury* really sent the admiral a letter of two pages. What is passed off as his whole “dispatch,” is actually only the concluding sentence of the letter, excerpted and dressed up. An unscrupulous admiralty official, for the purposes of a book on the campaign, manipulated the letter and printed its last paragraph by itself as the entire despatch. Historians following one another have since then simply copied Secretary Corbett.

Our first *Sandwich* broke the French line at the battle of La Hogue, and lost her gallant captain in doing it. Another bore Rodney's flag in five battles—two with the Spaniards and three with the French—and was at the first relief of Gibraltar during the Great Siege. Our first *Dover* was present at the taking of Jamaica. Another won fame as Captain Cloudesley Shovell's ship. Commodore Trunnion served on board another *Dover*, if Smollett spoke by the card in making him express a wish to be buried “in the red jacket which I wore when I boarded the *Renummy*.” Apart from the taking of Louis the Fifteenth's frigate *Renommée*, if we count in other French and Spanish frigates and privateers taken,

our various *Dovers*, in their time, must have brought home captured flags enough to deck the town out from end to end. All, of course, have long since rotted out of existence. People in old times set little store by such trophies. "What are you going to do with all these flags?" a friend once asked of a frigate captain who, in his barge, gaily decorated from bows to stern with the colours of ships taken during the commission, was being pulled in from Spithead to land at the old Sally Port, Portsmouth. "Do with them?" came the reply. "Why, take 'em home and hang 'em on the trees round father's garden."

It was a *Chatham* whose twenty-four pounders, one May morning, just a hundred and forty-eight years ago, gave the Royal Navy our first, and the original, "Saucy" *Arethusa*. One *Maidstone* fought with Blake at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Another, acting as "guide of the fleet," led Hawke to victory on that stormy November afternoon among the reefs of Quiberon Bay, which the French Navy, pillorying the memory of its unfortunate admiral, has ever since called "la journée de M. Conflans."

A *Greenwich* fought at La Hogue, and was one of Benbow's squadron in his last fight. One *Deptford* was also at La Hogue, and another with Byng off Minorca, where the *Deptford*, at any rate, did her duty. A *Romney*, in Queen Anne's war, after a career of distinction, went down with all on board to westward of St. Agnes, Scilly, on the night of the catastrophe to Sir Cloudesley Shovell. *Rochester*,

and *Medway*, and *Sheerness*, are also man-of-war names that have attaching to them interesting memories of the fighting days of old, as have too, in one way or other, in differing degrees, the remaining names of the group, *Woolwich* and *Faversham*, *Eltham* and *Deal Castle*, *Margate*, *Queenborough*, and *Folkestone*.

Our modern-day cruiser the *Kent* has her own story also as a man-of-war, a notable and interesting historic reputation of her own, to uphold. This summary will give its points, the "battle honours" which the *Kent* would be entitled to bear on her ship's flag were our ships authorized to follow the practice of the army in regard to regimental flags.

#### H.M.S. *KENT*.

Blake's victory over Tromp off Portland .	Feb., 1653
Blake and Monk's victory off Lowestoft .	June, 1653
Monk's victory over Tromp off Camper- down . . . . .	July, 1653
Blake's bombardment of Tunis . . .	April, 1655
Duke of York's victory off the North Foreland . . . . .	June, 1665
Rupert and Albemarle—"The Four Days' Fight" . . . . .	June, 1666
Rupert and Albemarle—"The St. James's Day Fight" . . . . .	July, 1666
Battle off Cape Barfleur and Attack at La Hogue . . . . .	May, 1692
Rooke's battle in Vigo Bay . . . .	Oct., 1702
Capture of a French convoy off Granville .	July, 1703

Battle of Malaga <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	Aug., 1704
Siege of Barcelona . . . . .	Sept., 1705
Action with Duguay Trouin . . . . .	April, 1709
Capture of the French 60-gun ship <i>Superbe</i>	July, 1710
Sir George Byng's victory off Messina .	July, 1718
Relief of Gibraltar . . . . .	Feb., 1727
Capture of the Spanish 74-gun ship <i>Princessa</i> . . . . .	April, 1740
Hawke's victory off Finisterre . . . .	Oct., 1747
Taking of Geriah . . . . .	Feb., 1756
Recapture of Calcutta and bombardment of Chandernagore . . . . .	Feb., 1757
Alexandria . . . . .	Mar., 1801
Service with Nelson off Toulon . . . .	1803-4
In the Mediterranean . . . . .	1807-12

A peculiarly interesting memento of the *Kent* in connection with one of these battles is in existence. It refers to the part played by the *Kent* of Charles the Second's navy just before the battle of June, 1666, "The Four Days' Fight," in which Monk, Duke of Albemarle, during Prince Rupert's temporary absence with a third of the fleet in the Channel, without waiting for Rupert to rejoin, rashly flung his weaker force on De Ruyter with the whole of

<sup>1</sup> A *Kent* should have been with the two Kentish admirals Rooke and Byng at the taking of Gibraltar. She was with the fleet, but during the bombardment was stationed to keep watch off Cape de Gata, for the possible appearance on the scene of the French Toulon Fleet, which Rooke fought at Malaga, a month later. From on board the *Kent*, as the officers' journals describe, they heard the sound of Rooke's guns attacking Gibraltar, and uncertain whether the Toulon Fleet might not have got round by hugging the African coast, and the firing be that of the fleet in action with them, the *Kent* turned back to Gibraltar, arriving in time to witness the first hoisting of the British flag on the fortress.

the Dutch fleet at hand and brought about a general engagement.

The *Kent* had been sent off on the 27th of May on a scouting cruise between "Blackness" (the old name for Cape Grisnez) and Ostend. Late in the evening of the 30th of May the following letter was handed to the Duke of Albemarle from the captain of the *Kent*, sent across by a Dutch ketch that the *Kent* had taken :—

" May it please yr Grace,

" This morning being off Gravelines in chase of a small ship and a ketch belonging to Newport, as they pretend, whom I have sent into the Downs to your Grace, I mett with a Swede who came from Amsterdam on Sunday last in his ballast, bound for Bordeaux, who relates that 75 sayle of the Flemish Fleet sett sayle out of the Texel the 21st present, and 28 more from Zealand, leaving 6 ships behind them, whose men they tooke out to man the rest of the Fleet, & stooode away to the Northwest, which as my duty binds me I have thought fit to acquaint yr Grace with: & humbly kissing your hands I remain

" Yr Grace's most humble servant  
to be commanded,

" THOS. EWENS.

" From aboard his Mat<sup>ies</sup> shipp *Kent*:  
this 30th May, 1666."

The captain of the *Kent's* letter was considered so important that Albemarle at once sent it off by

express to the Admiralty. It is still in existence; a stained sheet of yellowish paper with the writing crabbed and not easily decipherable, and brown with age and faded. The letter, with Albemarle's covering note, was found many years afterwards among some correspondence that had belonged to King James the Second, just as the letter had been filed on its receipt at the Admiralty in 1666, when James, Duke of York, was Lord High Admiral. It is endorsed:—

“For his Grace the Duke of Albemarle, aboard the *Royall Charles* this — d.dd. In the Downes.”

Albemarle's covering letter to the Admiralty bears the curiously scrawled endorsements of the various postmasters on the Dover Road as they passed the courier along on his hurried journey up to London:—“Received ye packett at Canterbury, att past 5 in ye Morneing, by Mee, Edw Wheiston”; “Sittingborne, past 8 in ye morning, by mee Wm Webb”; “Rochester, past ten Before noon, Wm Brooker”; “Gravesend at nowne, Hen White.”

Albemarle was roughly handled and had to beat a retreat for the mouth of the Thames—fighting a rear-guard action, skilfully conducted and gallantly contested. Rupert joined him just in time to avert disaster, but one of the English flagships, the *Prince*, grounded at the last moment on the Galloper Shoal, and was taken by the Dutch and burned as she lay. This was just as the *Kent* re-joined the flag, in time for the last day's battle.

Cromwell, it is curious to note, first gave the name

Kent to the navy for a man-of-war; one November day of the year 1652. On that day—Saturday, the 6th of November—an application from the Admiralty Committee as to the names for four frigates, two of which were to be launched in the following week, was laid before the Lord General Cromwell and the Commonwealth Council of State. The reply was that the following would be the names: *Kentish*, *Essex*, *Hampshire*, and *Sussex*. So a State Paper, now among the national archives in the Record Office, explicitly states. In their selection the Council made thereby a new departure, and introduced a set of man-of-war names entirely different from any before known at sea. The little group of four ships named in November, 1652, leads the way at the head of the long series of British men-of-war which have borne the names of our counties in battle on the sea with distinction on so many historic days.

Why the form “Kentish” was preferred to “Kent” for the first of the four ships, is a matter that is not quite obvious. The name, of course, may have been appointed for no particular reason. The four names chosen were names of four seaboard counties, locally interested in maritime affairs, and it may well have been thought that to call one of the ships the “Kentish” was much the same thing as calling her the “Kent.” On the other hand, there may have been in addition something behind, in regard to the name appointed. Everybody knows, *teste* Lord Macaulay, why the

Puritan authorities put down bull-baiting; not because it hurt the bull, but because it pleased the people. The Puritans rather liked, it is to be feared, making themselves deliberately offensive to those who saw otherwise to them. It is certainly curious, if not significant, that at the Restoration the name "Kentish" disappears forthwith from off the official Navy List, and "Kent" appears instead. This was just at the time, too, that certain distinctly obnoxious names, bestowed on men-of-war by the Puritan authorities, as, for instance, *Naseby*, *Marston Moor*, *Worcester*, *Torrington*, *Newbury*, *Dunbar*, *Tredagh* (the vernacular for *Drogheda*), were replaced by names such as *Royal Charles*, *York*, *Dunkirk*, *Dreadnought*, *Revenge*, *Henry*, and *Resolution*.

Was any reference intended in the form "Kentish," as originally appointed for the new ship of 1652, to the "Kentish Rising" of 1648, and its hard fate under the sword blades of Fairfax's troopers? Was the name designed as a reminder to the Royalists of South-Eastern England? Was it meant as a memento of the penalty that had been paid by so many who, only four years before, had buckled on sword and ridden forth so blithely to the county marching song:—

Kentish men, keep your King,  
Long swords and brave hearts bring,  
Down with the rebels, and slit their crop ears!  
Hell now is wanting rogues,  
Send there the canting dogges,  
Ride to the scurry, my Kent cavaliers!



God and our King for grace,  
 Leave now your wives' embrace,  
 Up and avenge all their insults for years !  
 Ironsides ! Who's afraid ?  
 Pack 'em to Lucifer,  
 Ride to the scurry, my Kent cavaliers !

The name "*Kentish*," if introduced with such intention, would help in serving to recall in the stately mansions of the squires of Kent, and in many a humble yeoman's home as well, why there were vacant places round the family board.

A brief comparison between Cromwell's *Kentish* and her lineal successor of our own day, His Majesty's ship the *Kent*, may be of interest in conclusion.

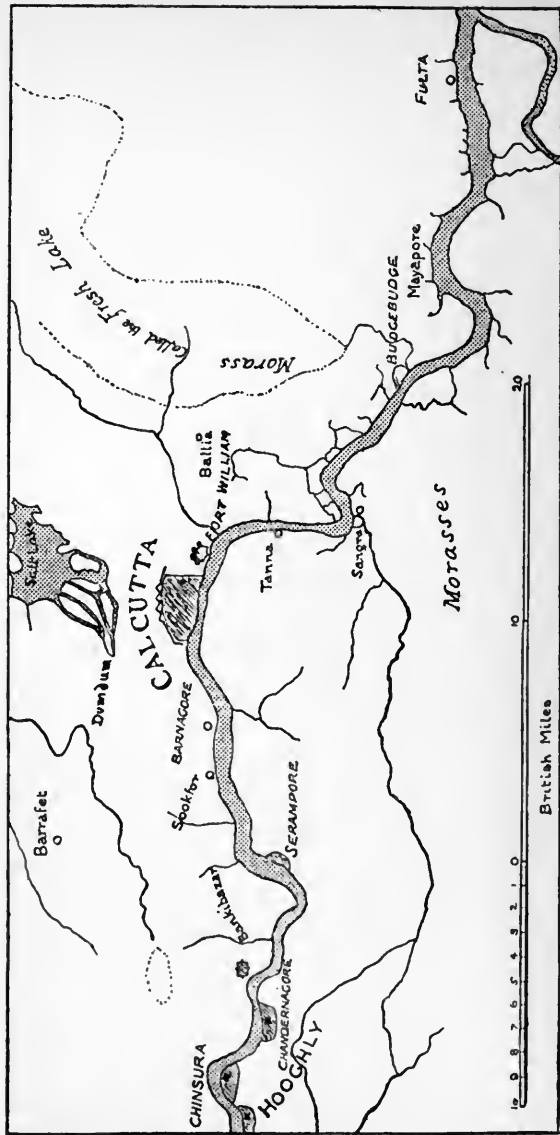
The *Kentish* was of 601 tons burthen, 187 feet in length of hull, 32½ feet beam, and 15 feet draught. Our modern *Kent* is 440 feet between perpendiculars (463½ feet over all), 66 feet beam, and 24½ feet depth. The first *Kent*, under full sail, might perhaps do nine knots at her best speed ; the present *Kent*, with her engines of 22,000 horse power, has done twenty-three knots an hour. The first *Kent's* guns, forty in number, were identical with the guns that Queen Elizabeth's fleet carried when it fought the Spanish Armada ; the same kind of guns, practically, that Henry the Eighth's *Mary Rose* had on board when she capsized at Spithead. The same quaint old mediæval style of nomenclature, indeed, was still in vogue for the *Kentish's* guns. They were called culverins (18-pounders), demi-culverins (9-pounders),

and sakers (6-pounders). The heaviest of them, the culverins, weighed 48 cwt. each, and were  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in calibre. The *Kentish's* guns also were of brass, specially cast for her ; refounded, for the most part, according to an existing Ordnance order, out of condemned pieces and captured Royalist cannon. According to a curious manuscript list of the ship's equipment, the *Kentish* when ready for sea had on board as her establishment of war stores—908 round shot, 468 double-headed shot, 100 barrels of powder, 60 muskets ; and for close-quarter fighting, 7 blunderbusses, 60 pikes, and 40 hatchets. The modern *Kent* carries as her main armament 6-inch quick-firing steel guns, each firing 100-pounder shot and shell, and able to discharge, each piece in half a minute, heavier metal than the whole broadside (270 lb.) of the original *Kentish*. The old ship, of course, was built of wood, oak timber ; most of which, as a curious fact, seems to have been cut on the confiscated estates of delinquent Royalists in the County of Kent. The new *Kent*, built of steel, and with 4-inch Krupp armour along her water-line, cost to complete for sea upwards of three-quarters of a million sterling ; the *Kentish* frigate, guns and all, cost £5000, or in present-day money from £20,000 to £25,000.

That the gallant "Kents" of His Majesty's navy at the present hour are quite ready to give a satisfactory account of themselves before the enemy, should occasion arise, may be judged from their firing record in the "gunlayers competition" for

1907. With the 12-pounder, the average per gun for the whole ship was 11·18 hits a minute. Petty Officer Nash achieved fourteen hits in fourteen rounds, the run, during which the score was made, being only of fifty-five seconds duration. In his fifty-five seconds Able Seaman Ramsden fired fifteen rounds, the time taken to load and fire each time being just over three and a half seconds, and he hit the target thirteen times. During the light quick-firing gunlayers' test, the *Kent* fired, in the short space of fifty-five seconds, 107 rounds, scoring 83 hits, from her 12-pounders; and 42 rounds, scoring 35 hits, from her 3-pounders. Some of the guns hit the target with every shot they fired, and the loading was wonderfully smart, averaging 15 rounds per gun for the fifty-five seconds.

The *Kent* of King Edward's fleet was laid down at Portsmouth Dockyard on the 12th of February, 1900, as a first-class armoured cruiser, and launched on Wednesday, the 6th of March, 1901, Lady Hotham, the wife of the Admiral Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, naming the ship in the orthodox way, with wine grown and produced within the British Empire, and specially presented for the ceremony by the Agent-General of South Australia. The *Kent* was the first to be launched of our modern set of County Cruisers. She was also the first to hoist the pennant and join the fleet at sea.



THE SCENE OF THE OPERATIONS UNDER ADMIRAL WATSON AND CLIVE

[From Major James Rennell's "Bengal Atlas," published in 1781. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society.]

### III

## THE AVENGERS OF THE BLACK HOLE :—

### WHAT THE NAVY DID FOR CLIVE

The fathers in glory do sleep  
That gathered with him to the fight,  
But the sons shall eternally keep  
The tablet of gratitude bright.

**T**HIS year, 1907, has witnessed the coming round of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of British rule in India. It has recalled to memory too, among some of us at any rate, the name of one of the great Englishmen of history, Clive, and how he set his hand to the work which, in its ultimate outcome, placed the realms of the Great Mogul beneath the sovereignty of the British flag. The part that the Royal Navy took side by side with Clive and his soldiers is perhaps hardly as fully recognized as it should be, considering all that it meant. For that reason, among others, the fine story of what took place, of the help that our bluejackets of that time gave when the situation was most critical, finds its place here. The navy had its own *rôle* to take in the stirring drama, and it fulfilled it—completely,

faultlessly, resistlessly. Without the navy—the squadron then on duty in Indian waters—Clive would have been powerless, and the golden hour for England, with its opportunities, would have had to be let go by.

In the summer of 1757 the British East Indies Squadron had not long arrived in the Bay of Bengal. It had come out from England four or five months previously in anticipation of the outbreak of a war with France. After carrying out operations against the pirate strongholds of the Malabar coast, it had gone round to take post off Madras, at that time the most important of the British settlements in the East. It was in the neighbourhood of Fort St. George when, absolutely as a bolt from the blue, came the news of the catastrophe at Calcutta, which led to the tragedy of the Black Hole.

At that moment news was expected by every ship from England that war had been declared with France, and part of the British squadron was on the watch down the coast, off St. David's. It seemed quite possible, indeed, that the first intelligence of war might be the appearance on the scene of a French squadron from Mauritius, cleared for action. All were keenly on the alert, almost from the first arrival of the British force on the coast. There was no means of knowing whether the French were not already on their way, and every precaution was taken against surprise. A daily mast-head look-out was kept for six weeks, the ships being maintained in readiness every night to clear for action at short notice.

So little was trouble from the north expected, that month of July, 1757, that an expeditionary force under Clive to assist the Subahdar of Hyderabad in his quarrel with M. Bussy was on the point of setting out.

To help the Subahdar a force of three hundred European soldiers and fifteen hundred Sepoys of the Madras army was told off, and to counteract the consequent weakening of the garrison of Madras, Admiral Watson, the Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies Squadron, was requested to bring his squadron higher up the coast so as to keep guard in the immediate vicinity of Fort St. George.

The Admiral did as he was asked, after which, just as the Hyderabad column was on the point of marching off, the blow from Bengal fell.

In the second week of July a letter came from Governor Drake at Calcutta with the news that the new Nawab-Vizier of Bengal, Suraj-u-daulah, had seized the Honourable East India Company's factory at Cossimbazar and made the officials there prisoners. There was great anxiety at Madras, and Major Kilpatrick, of the East India Company's service, with three companies of European troops, was at once sent north, on board a Company's ship, to render what assistance he could. The Bengal military establishment at that time comprised only five hundred men—two hundred Europeans and three hundred Sepoys. The dispatch of the soldiers for Calcutta delayed the start of the expedition for Hyderabad; and then, just as marching orders were

about to be given for the second time, on the 5th of August, a second letter from Bengal arrived.

To the amazement and consternation of all, they learnt that Calcutta had fallen. Suraj-u-daulah had swooped down on the settlement with seventy thousand men, with cannon and four hundred elephants, and had captured Fort William. Governor Drake sent the message from a place called Fulta, a river-side village in the Sunderbunds, some forty miles below Calcutta. The garrison of Fort William, he said, had made a defence for five days, after which, ammunition failing, he and the higher officials had taken refuge on board what ships there were in the Hooghly and retreated with them to Fulta. The women were safe on board the ships, said the Governor, but all were in the utmost distress and great danger. They appealed for help at the earliest possible moment. Not a word was said of any one being left behind in Fort William ; not a syllable about the tragedy of the Black Hole. News of that apparently had not yet reached Fulta. But without the crowning tragedy, the news, as it reached Madras, was bad enough. It came with stunning effect : "A blow as filled us all with inexpressible consternation," to use the words of Dr. Ives, the surgeon of Admiral Watson's flagship, the *Kent*.

To recover Calcutta and take vengeance on the Nawab were the thoughts uppermost in every one's mind at Madras. A sloop-of-war, the *Kingfisher*, was hastily dispatched northward on the day after the receipt of the news to render assistance to the



ships with the refugees on board, which would probably be found lying weather-bound in the Hooghly. The troops for Hyderabad were ordered to stand fast. An urgent message was sent to Fort St. David to summon Clive to the Presidency. Clive hurried to Madras, and with Governor Pigott and the Council discussed the situation.

Discussion, however, soon disclosed a difference of opinion as to what should be done. Some of the leading people at Madras were nervous for themselves. Certain members of the Council objected to any weakening of the garrison. War with France, they said, was imminent. It was quite possible indeed, according to late advices from Hyderabad, that the Subahdar and M. Bussy might settle their quarrel and combine against Madras. With that possibility before them, was it wise to strip Madras entirely of its garrison, now that the worst had already happened in Bengal? The Council met day after day, and adjourned without coming to any decision. Fortunately in the end the bolder spirits prevailed. By a majority the Council decided to equip an expedition and send help to Bengal as soon as the weather—it was the monsoon season—would let the expedition start.

It was agreed, after a consultation with Admiral Watson, that Colonel Adlercron's regiment (39th Foot) and 1500 Sepoys should be shipped on board the men-of-war and some Indiamen then in the Roads, and proceed to Balasore, at the mouth of the Hooghly. There the vessels then housing the Cal-

cutta refugees would transfer them on board the three larger men-of-war, the flagship *Kent*, the *Cumberland*, and the *Tyger*, which ships, it was held, drew too much water to cross the shoals at the mouth of the Hooghly. The Indiamen and the Calcutta ships would then transport the soldiers up the river and recapture Calcutta, escorted and assisted by three smaller men-of-war, the *Salisbury*, the *Bridgewater*, and the *Kingfisher*.

These arrangements had all been completed when something totally unexpected happened. A Bombay runner arrived with dispatches from the Admiralty, sent overland, recalling the whole of Admiral Watson's squadron to England at once. "It was," as Dr. Ives describes, "a terrible blow." But the Admiral proved equal to the situation. He held an informal consultation in his cabin with his second in command, Rear-Admiral Pocock, and Flag-Captain Speke. Taking all responsibility on himself, the Admiral decided to postpone his departure until after the expedition to Bengal had been successfully carried through. An emergency had arisen, he wrote in his reply to England, which the Admiralty could not have foreseen, which imperatively required the continued presence of the squadron on the station. Then Admiral Watson went ashore to communicate his dispatches to the Governor in Council. His opening intimation that the men-of-war had been recalled created, in the words of Dr. Ives, "blank consternation." It would mean, as the Council formally resolved, "the total ruin of

the Company's affairs in the Indies." They expressed themselves as helpless without the Navy, and were overwhelmingly grateful when they learned that the Admiral had decided, on his own responsibility, to disobey his orders.

At the last moment, though, there was further delay; it was over a question of military etiquette. Who should command the expedition—Colonel Adlercron, a King's officer, or Lieutenant-Colonel Clive, a Company's officer, who had local rank as colonel? There was further wrangling over this matter, and valuable time was lost, until it was finally settled that the supreme command of both sea and land forces should be vested in Vice-Admiral Watson as senior commissioned officer in the East, with Clive in charge of the troops—both King's and Company's.

The expedition finally set sail on the 16th of October, two months and ten days after the news of the Black Hole first reached Madras. It comprised five men-of-war—the *Kent*, *Cumberland*, *Tyger*, *Salisbury*, *Bridgewater*, and the *Blaze*, a fireship; three Company's Indiamen, and two country ships. All the ships carried soldiers and army stores.

Vice-Admiral Charles Watson, the Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies, was a capable and zealous leader. He was a naval officer of the very best type, and in addition, it was admitted on all hands, a noble-hearted, considerate English gentleman. He had been very seriously ill while on the way out from England—so ill indeed that, on learning soon after

his first arrival at Bombay that there was a possibility of the expected war with the French not breaking out for some time, he had applied to go home again at once on sick leave. When he reached Madras he learnt officially that war was imminent, and he wrote off at once cancelling his application. If that were so there was no going home now for Admiral Watson. Ill as he was, he would stay out to fight the French once more. It was characteristic of the man—of the captain of the *Dragon* in 1743—who, as the Navy of those days well remembered, when detached by Admiral Mathews from off Toulon, as a special favour to a smart officer, to cruise off Cadiz just when the treasure galleons from the Spanish Main were expected to arrive, with additional instructions to go on afterwards to Lisbon and carry the merchants' treasure thence to England—the most lucrative employment a naval man could possibly look for—deliberately, on hearing at Gibraltar that a battle was likely to take place off Toulon, turned his back on a sum of prize-money that would have made him wealthy for life, saying, “He thought his ship would be wanted with the fleet.” The old heroic spirit of a captain who had been specially mentioned in dispatches for gallantry in every battle that he fought in—by Mathews off Toulon, and in 1747 by both Anson and Hawke—overcame the bodily weakness of an invalid.

It took six weeks to reach Balasore Roads, a distance of only seven hundred miles on a direct course. Owing to the delay at Madras they had, as

the phrase went, "lost the passage." With the south-west monsoon, which held from May to the middle of September, it took ordinarily from ten days to a fortnight to sail from Madras to Calcutta. Now they had the north-east monsoon to face—head winds all the way. It was not until the first week of December that the leading ships of the squadron were able to reach Balasore. They had sailed, with the wind, according to the flagship's log, at west-north-west. Next day the wind shifted to north-east, dead against them. The strong current in the Bay of Bengal, which at that time of year sets down the Coromandel coast at one to five knots an hour, swept the squadron down until they came within sight of Point San Pedro, in Ceylon, thirteen leagues east of Trincomalee. On some days there were dead calms, when they barely made from three to five miles' progress in twenty-four hours. Between the 28th of October and the 5th of November only six leagues' advance was made altogether. Rough weather set in, during which the *Salisbury* sprang a dangerous leak, and the whole squadron had to shorten sail and stand by for a whole day until the leak had been found and stopped. Finally, a storm scattered the squadron far and wide. The *Kent* and *Tyger*, the two leading ships, arrived at Balasore Roads on the 3rd of December by themselves. The rest of the squadron were at that time miles astern, trying to weather Palmyras Point. Two of the ships, indeed, never got to Balasore at all; they had to bear away until

they drifted right round Ceylon and anchored at Bombay.

At Balasore Admiral Watson got fresh news about what had been happening in Bengal. He now heard, for the first time, details of the taking of Fort William and of the grim tragedy of the Black Hole. Two English pilots who boarded the flagship told the story. The attack, said the men, opened on June 15th, Tuesday, and after a vain attempt to hold the gaol and Court House and a small redoubt in front of the city, the garrison had been driven into the fort. There it was found they had only ammunition for three days' fighting. The women and children were thereupon sent on board the ships in the river, lying off the Maidan, and in the confusion that followed their departure, Governor Drake and most of the leading civilians—according to the pilots—deserted their posts, and stole off on board ship to join the women, after which they induced the skippers to weigh anchor and drop down the river, leaving the garrison cut off and without means of escape. These under Mr. Holwell, a member of the Council, had fought on gallantly, keeping the enemy off until the afternoon of Sunday the 20th, when, being at their last cartridge, they beat a parley. While they were talking from the walls, the enemy by treachery got possession of one of the fort gates (that in the rear), rushed the guard, and compelled the garrison to surrender at discretion. That night the prisoners, a hundred and seventy-five in number, were crammed all together into the Black Hole, whence next morn-

ing only sixteen were left alive. Of the sixteen, Mr. Holwell and Mr. Burdett, a writer, with two others, had been heavily ironed and sent to the Nawab's camp. Such was the tale told to Admiral Watson.

The refugees at Fulta, added the pilots, were in a deplorable state ; fever-stricken and short of food ; in terror of their lives ; living, some in tents on shore, some on board the ships in the river. The Nawab, it was reported, had withdrawn to Moorshedabad, but his general, Manikchand, was at Calcutta with nearly four thousand men. He was busy throwing up batteries at various points along the river bank to bar any approach by ships.

Admiral Watson, on hearing that, made up his mind to try and get up the Hooghly to Fulta with the *Kent* at once, without waiting for the rest of the squadron or the troops.

The pilots, however, made objection to carrying the flagship into the river. It was impossible, they said, to get so big a ship over the Braces, the belt of shoals across the mouth of the Hooghly on the Balasore side, with the tides as they were. They doubted, indeed, if it could be done at all, even at spring tides. On the usual "crossing track" over the Western Brace, the deepest channel, they said, was only three fathoms. But Admiral Watson had made up his mind to try. On the pilots finally declining to assist in taking the flagship into the river Captain Speke, the captain of the *Kent*, volunteered to make the attempt. He had been up the Hooghly

once before, and he could, he believed, find a channel deep enough to carry the *Kent* over the Braces. The *Tyger* was to remain behind to bring on the rest of the squadron on their arrival.

The flagship set out, after a week's further detention at Balasore owing to strong north easterly winds, her boats towing her. Captain Speke navigated the ship, and with such success that a channel was found through the Western Brace that gave four fathoms of water at half-tide. It proved sufficient to float the ship over safely. On the 12th of December, they were at anchor off Kedgerree (Khichri), sixty-seven miles from Fort William by water. After this the wind changed to westerly and the *Kent* was able to work up the estuary under sail.

Fulta was reached on the 15th, and the rescue of the fugitives from Calcutta effected. Major Kilpatrick and his men were found there, and the *Kingfisher*. The flagship herself had on board two hundred and fifty men of the 39th Foot under Captain Eyre Coote, afterwards the celebrated General Sir Eyre Coote. There was also a detachment of Sepoys, who had arrived two days before by the *Protector*, a Bombay cruiser, which had touched at Madras just after the squadron left there, and had since got ahead of them. At Fulta Governor Drake, the ex-Governor of Calcutta, came on board to see the Admiral.

The *Tyger* reached Fulta on the 16th, and the *Salisbury* and the rest of the men-of-war and the Indiamen with the troops on board, between then



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and the 26th. The *Cumberland* and the *Marlborough* Indiaman were still missing.

The tides, meanwhile, were too low to allow any of the ships to cross the sand-bar above Fulta and proceed further up the Hooghly until after the 27th.

Admiral Watson used the interval to send a letter to Suraj-u-daulah. He wrote courteously, but firmly, demanding the immediate restoration of Calcutta and compensation for property looted and destroyed. The letter was sent off on the 18th of December, but no reply came. None had arrived ten days later, when the forward movement up the river began. The *Kent*, *Tyger*, *Salisbury*, *Bridge-water*, and *Kingfisher* comprised the ships told off for the recovery of Calcutta. They carried up with them eight hundred soldiers and twelve hundred Sepoys—all that were available in the absence of the detachments on board the belated ships.

The first fight took place at Baj-Baj, or Budge-Budge, as the name was spelled by the English, where a fort on the right bank of the Hooghly threatened to bar their passage. Owing to the narrow and tortuous channel the ships could only move up in line ahead. They sailed with the *Tyger* leading, and the flagship next. The Nawab's troops were reported to be in force at Budge-Budge, which mounted eighteen 24-pounders, and was built with bastions and curtains and a wet ditch.

Clive and his Sepoys were put ashore at Mayapore, ten miles below Budge-Budge, to act against Manikchand, whose army had taken post in the neigh-

bourhood of the fort. Manikchand's men, though, made only a poor stand, and fell back, their position being turned by the steady advance of the *Tyger* and *Kent*.

The ships anchored that night, and proceeded next morning, the enemy on shore at the same time falling back before them on Budge-Budge.

Between seven and eight o'clock, as the *Tyger* and *Kent* rounded into the reach in front of the fort, the Nawab's gunners opened a brisk cannonade.

The two ships took no notice, beyond firing a few guns to cover their approach and shroud themselves in smoke, until they had come abreast of the ramparts. Then, at three minutes past eight by the *Kent's* log, both ships let go anchor, and as the *Kent* ran up the red flag at the fore, the first broadside thundered out. The battle lasted for an hour and a half before the nearest ships astern, the *Salisbury* and *Bridgewater* could join in. About the same time Clive's Sepoys got again into action with Manikchand's troops on the further side of Budge-Budge. Captain Coote and men of the 39th Foot on board the *Kent* were now landed to reinforce Clive, while the navy dealt with the fort, the key of the position. The Nawab's gunners for their part fought their pieces bravely, and the tough chunam and brick of the walls of Budge-Budge stood four hours more hard battering. By half-past one, however, the breastwork rampart facing the river had been almost smashed down all along its length, and the guns there all either dismounted or disabled.

The Nawab's troops on shore had by this time begun to draw off, and the action slackened down to a casual musketry fire here and there. The fort, however, still held out, and a sharp fusillade came from its walls. Apparently the garrison were looking for Manikchand's return to their relief. Admiral Watson on that sent for Clive, and a Council of War was held on board the *Kent*. It was decided to storm Budge-Budge at daybreak next morning. Clive's soldiers were given the afternoon to rest after their work of the past twenty-four hours. To assist in the storming a naval battalion, made up of an officer, two midshipmen, and forty men from each of the men-of-war, was landed, with two of the *Kent's* 9-pounders which were to batter in the main gate.

As things turned out there was no need of the storming party. That evening, while the troops were bivouacking before the fort, a sailor from the *Kent* took Budge-Budge all by himself. The story is best told in the words of Dr. Ives, our correspondent on the spot :

"All was now quiet in the camp," he begins, "and we on board the ships, which lay at their anchors but a small distance from the shore, had entertained thoughts of making use of this interval to refresh ourselves with an hour or two of sleep, but suddenly a loud and universal acclamation was heard from the shore, and soon afterwards an account was brought to the Admiral that the place had been taken by storm."

Great was the astonishment on board at the news,

and "great joy" as Dr. Ives relates, "the more so as it was quite unexpected." Then, as it would seem, when they heard what had actually taken place, everybody affected to be scandalized rather than pleased. "When the particular circumstances that ushered in this success were related," continues the worthy surgeon of the *Kent*, "our exultation was greatly abated, because we found that the rules so indispensably necessary in all military exploits had been disregarded in the present instance, and therefore could not help looking upon the person who had the principal hand in this victory rather as an object of chastisement than of applause."

This, to resume with the Doctor, is how Budge-Budge fell :

"During the tranquil state of the camp, one Strahan, a common sailor, belonging to the *Kent*, having been just served with grog (arrack mixed with water), had his spirits too much elated to think of taking any rest : he therefore strayed by himself towards the fort, and imperceptibly got under the walls. Being advanced thus far without interruption, he took it into his head to scale it at a breach that had been made by the cannon of the ships, and having luckily gotten upon the bastion, he there discovered several Moors<sup>1</sup> sitting upon the platform, at whom he flourished his cutlass and fired his pistol, and then, after giving three loud huzzas, cried out—"The place is mine." The Moorish soldiers immedi-

<sup>1</sup> The usual term with Europeans in the East at that time for the "natives," as we say nowadays.

ately attacked him, and he defended himself with incomparable resolution, but in the rencounter had the misfortune to have the blade of his cutlass cut in two, about a foot from the hilt. This mischance, however, did not happen until he was near being supported by two or three other sailors who had accidentally straggled to the same part of the fort on which the other had mounted. They, hearing Strahan's huzzas, immediately scaled the breach likewise, and echoing the triumphant sound roused the whole army, who, taking the alarm, presently fell on pell-mell, without orders and without discipline, following the example of the sailors."

Completely taken by surprise and scared out of their wits the garrison bolted *en masse*, and Budge-Budge was ours. It was found to mount in all eighteen guns, mostly 24-pounders—the average size of a siege piece of the day—and to have a well stocked magazine.

Neither the Admiral's official dispatch nor the flagship's log, as it happens, make any mention whatever of Strahan or his exploit. Admiral Watson says: "At half-past eight the body of the fort was on fire, and immediately after news was received that the Place was taken, but the few people in it had all escaped." The flagship's log is briefer still. It simply notes: "At forty-five minutes past eight Captain Bridge came on board with an account of our being in possession of the Fort."

Next morning, according to the etiquette of the time, the British flag was hoisted on the ramparts of

the fort and a seventeen-gun salute to Admiral Watson, as commander-in-chief of the expedition, was ceremoniously fired.

That being done, Strahan was brought before the Admiral by the master-at-arms to explain matters. Admiral Watson, we are told, "thought it necessary to show himself displeased with a measure in which the want of all discipline so notoriously appeared. He therefore angrily accosted this brave fellow with: 'Strahan, what is this you have been doing?' The untutored hero, after having made his bow, scratched his head and, with one hand twirling his hat, replied: 'Why, to be sure, sir, it was I who took the fort, but I hope there was no harm in it.' The Admiral with difficulty suppressed a smile excited by the simplicity of the answer, and the language and the manner which he used in recounting the several particulars of his mad exploit. Admiral Watson then expatiated on the fatal consequences that might have attended his irregular conduct, and with a severe rebuke dismissed him, but not without dropping some hints that at a proper opportunity he would certainly be punished for his temerity. Strahan, amazed to find himself blamed for an action that he thought deserved praise and for which he expected to have received applause, in passing from the Admiral's cabin muttered, 'If I'm flogged for this here action, I'll never take another fort by myself as long as I live!'"

Some of the *Kent's* officers, as we are told, afterwards interceded with the Admiral for Strahan.

They were prompted, according to Dr. Ives, by Admiral Watson himself, who made that the excuse for openly pardoning the man. The Admiral, it would seem, was also desirous of promoting Strahan to boatswain's mate, with the idea of advancing him later on to full boatswain ; but unfortunately Strahan was too fond of his grog. His irregular ways in other respects were against him, and nothing could be done to reclaim him. His own highest ambition, as Strahan himself afterwards declared, was to get a cook's berth on board a first rate. Whether he ever got one history has not recorded. All that is known of him for certain is that twenty years afterwards he was alive and a Greenwich Hospital pensioner.

The troops were re-embarked on the evening of the 30th, all except the Sepoys, who were ordered to keep advancing along the river bank. Then next morning the squadron moved forward again, keeping the English soldiers on board. On the 31st the whole day was spent in laboriously working up the river, a difficult and intricate piece of navigation, owing to cross currents and dangerous shoals.

New Year's Day promised to be interesting, for they had Tanna just ahead of them, where there was a fort on one side of the river and a battery on the other. A stiff fight was looked for here, the position being a good one to make a stand at. But news of what had happened at Budge-Budge had gone in advance of them. As the *Tyger* and *Kent* drew near the works the garrisons on both sides suddenly

abandoned their guns and bolted. Not a shot was fired. The boats of the squadron were promptly sent ashore, and the fort and battery taken possession of. Forty pieces of cannon in all, many of them heavy guns, were found mounted and all well supplied with ammunition. In the afternoon the boats were again called away and dispatched up the river, manned and armed. It was reported that the enemy had had some half dozen native vessels prepared as fireships, and were waiting with them a little higher up, all ready to float down with the ebb of the tide that night on the squadron at its anchorage. The fireships were boarded and destroyed without serious opposition being offered.

Calcutta was in sight next morning. The squadron now comprised the *Tyger*, *Kent*, *Bridgewater*, and *Kingfisher*. The *Salisbury* had been left behind at Tanna to demolish the fortifications there and prevent their being re-occupied. Admiral Watson had also with him an extra vessel, the *Thunder*, a bomb-vessel, one of the country-ships found at Fulta and converted there for emergency purposes, in case bombardment might be needed to drive the enemy out of Fort William.

As before the attack on Budge-Budge, Clive and the Company's European troops were put ashore early. They were to move on the place overland while the ships attacked along the waterside.

Firing began at a quarter to ten from some batteries recently thrown up a little below Fort William, but, cowed by the experiences of their



comrades at Budge-Budge, as the *Tyger* and *Kent* closed on them the gunners in the outlying batteries cleared out and made off. Fort William itself was within range at ten o'clock, and twenty minutes later the *Tyger* and *Kent* let go anchor abreast of the ramparts and opened fire. The fort replied briskly, and kept up a hot fire for an hour and fifty minutes. Then suddenly the garrison, numbering some five hundred men ceased firing and deserted their guns, streaming off to the rear out of the fort. Clive's soldiers on shore were beginning to work round on the further side, and fearful at the idea of their retreat being cut off, the garrison gave way and fled in confusion. With the recapture of Fort William the main object of the expedition had been achieved. On board the squadron the casualties from first to last had been nine seamen and three soldiers killed and twenty-six seamen and five soldiers wounded.

Admiral Watson landed a party of seamen and the men of the 39th Foot serving on board the squadron, all in charge of Captain Richard King (afterwards Sir Richard), of the Royal Navy, a volunteer on board the *Kent*, who took formal possession of Fort William in the King's name. Later in the day Clive took over the charge of the place until the next morning, when he formally delivered the keys of Fort William over to the Admiral, who in turn formally handed them to Governor Drake. The ceremony of officially declaring war against the Nawab was at the same time ceremoniously performed, Governor Drake proclaiming war in the

name of the Honourable East India Company, after Admiral Watson had declared it in the name of His Majesty King George. Upwards of ninety guns were found in Fort William and a large store of ammunition.

The Navy in the events of the six weeks campaign against Suraj-u-daulah that followed, bore the brunt of the hard work and had their share in the fighting. First, a week after the taking of Calcutta, an expedition was sent up the Hooghly to attack the fort at the city of Hooghly, thirty miles up the river, the Nawab's capital of Lower Bengal. All the boats of the squadron, manned and armed, with the *Bridgewater* and the *Kingfisher* carrying two hundred European soldiers and two hundred and fifty Sepoys formed the expeditionary force. The fort at Hooghly was stormed, a midshipman of the *Kent*, Mr. William Hamilton, and two seamen of the flagship being among the killed, and several men were wounded. The Nawab's treasury was looted and the town burned. After that the sailors, under Captain Speke of the *Kent*, and with a small military detachment, went three miles higher up and burned the immense storehouses and granaries of the Nawab's army at Goongee. Suraj-u-daulah's advanced guard of some five thousand men was encamped close by in force, and attacked the little column, but the enemy were handsomely beaten off and the work carried through with complete success.

Again we have from Dr. Ives, incidentally, a curious story of much the same kind as that already

told of Strahan at Budge-Budge. Three men from the flagship, as it would seem, on the force returning to Hooghly, were missed. There was no trace of them or their fate. Nobody had seen them after the opening of the fight. Their disappearance could in no way be accounted for, except that they had been shot and overlooked in some extraordinary way. They were therefore entered as "killed." Next morning, to the general surprise, the three men made their appearance safe and sound, with an extraordinary tale of adventure. "Early the next morning," to quote the doctor's words, "a raft was observed floating down the river, and on it sat with the greatest composure possible our three missing sailors, who after they were taken off and brought on board their ship, gave the following account of their adventure." After the fighting they had straggled and gone to sleep. "Awakening in the beginning of the night, and perceiving their companions had left them, they judged it expedient to set fire to all the villages in order to intimidate the enemy and make them believe the whole detachment still continued on shore which had done them so much mischief the previous day. As soon as the day broke they repaired to the water's edge to search for a boat, in which they hoped to be conveyed on board their ship. No such thing, however, could be found, but luckily for them this raft at length presented itself, on which they resolved to trust themselves."

The men's story explained at the same time certain mysterious fires on shore during the previous night

which it had considerably puzzled those on board the ships to account for.

For the remainder of the month the squadron lay quietly at its anchorage off Fort William. Things meanwhile were shaping themselves elsewhere for more fighting.

Incensed beyond measure at having Calcutta wrested back from him and at the destruction of his State granaries at Hooghly, Suraj-u-daulah vowed vengeance. He would not rest, he swore, until he had driven every Englishman out of Bengal, and he promptly set to work to assemble his soldiery and make good his words. While his forces were mustering, to gain time the Nawab wrote to Admiral Watson, and expressed himself desirous of coming to an arrangement on friendly terms. When his preparations were completed he abruptly broke off the negotiations, and marched with his whole force directly on Calcutta. The Nawab's army was estimated at between forty and fifty thousand horse and foot, with forty guns.

Colonel Clive, on the first information of the enemy being on the move, on the 4th of February took post near Dum-dum with all the available troops—seven hundred Europeans, thirteen hundred Sepoys, and fourteen 6-pounders. He was out-flanked though at the outset by the pushing forward of the Nawab's advanced guard, and had to send off to Admiral Watson for help. It was at once afforded. Within less than an hour a strong naval brigade of nearly six hundred men, had landed

under arms. It was a night march to get to the army, and the seamen reached Clive at two in the morning, just as his little force was on the point of setting out with the idea of surprising Suraj-u-daulah in his quarters. The sailors joined the column, and they started. All promised well until they neared the enemy's lines. Then, at the critical moment, a dense fog, "thicker than on the Banks of Newfoundland," suddenly rolled up. The fog upset the native guides. Instead of striking the Nawab's camp they bore off to the left. That brought Clive front to front with a long field work, behind which the right wing of Suraj-u-daulah's army lay entrenched. Almost at the same moment the sun rose, and the fog thinned off and dispersed, leaving the small English force in a position that at the first glance looked well-nigh desperate.

It was not Clive's way, however, to lose his head. He fell back quickly and steadily, making a rear-guard fight of it for six hours, all the time keeping the enemy off and dealing great slaughter among their pursuing columns by the continuous cannonade from his 6-pounders, until at noon he regained the camp. In the fighting two of the guns had to be abandoned owing to their carriages breaking down. The loss on the English side was: a lieutenant of the *Salisbury* mortally wounded, twelve seamen and twenty-nine soldiers and Sepoys killed, including two captains of the Company's troops, fifteen seamen and between forty and fifty soldiers and Sepoys wounded. Suraj-u-daulah's loss was reported by a spy as being

upwards of thirteen hundred, including some of his best officers. At any rate, it staggered the Nawab. Startled at the audacity of Clive's attempt on his camp and its near approach to success, when the names of his fallen captains were told him he lost what little nerve he possessed, and in a state of abject fright sent a flag of truce to Calcutta declaring his readiness to treat for peace. To prove his good faith, as he said, he at the same time ordered his troops to break camp and withdraw up-country. The Calcutta Council, for their part, were quite ready to come to terms. Their demands included the restoration of their trading rights and of the *status quo* generally, together with the payment by the Nawab of a lump sum as compensation for property seized at Calcutta in the previous June. The terms were acceded to by Suraj-u-daulah, and articles of peace were ratified on the 9th of February.

The Council had agreed with their adversary quickly. They had reason to do so. A yet more threatening cloud was lowering on the horizon. The settlement with the Nawab came almost as a God-send to the Company's politicians at Calcutta, for the long-expected war between England and France had broken out.

Official intimation of the declaration of war had been received at Fort William five weeks before, but for very urgent reasons it had been deemed advisable

to keep the news secret if possible. The authorities at Calcutta understood that the French garrison at Chandernagore—barely twenty-five miles off up the Hooghly river—numbered some five hundred Europeans and a thousand Sepoys, and the French also had another garrison at Cossimbazaar (Kasim Bazar), within touch of Chandernagore. What if the French should make common cause with Suraj-u-daulah, then on his march down country, and reinforce his horde of armed men with their drilled troops, officered by men who had seen service. The bare idea was a nightmare to the Council of Calcutta.

As it happened, Governor Renault at Chandernagore had received the news of war with England on the very day (the 6th of January) that the officials at Fort William had their information. They, too, for their own particular reasons, had decided for the time being to say nothing about it. The French at Chandernagore were, as a fact, in a very different position from what they were thought to be at Calcutta. The garrison actually numbered only a hundred and forty-six European soldiers, many of whom were invalids, and some three hundred Sepoys. In addition there were between three and four hundred officials, traders, and sailors belonging to ships from France in the river. What was to be done was a very difficult question. There seemed to be two courses open. One was to join with the Nawab in his campaign against Calcutta then—in January—just about to 'open. Suraj-u-daulah had himself

already pressed them to side with him. He had heard rumours as to the relations between England and France. The other course for the French was to temporize, and try to form a private treaty of neutrality between Chandernagore and Calcutta. This course the French adopted, and they sent an emissary to Calcutta to make propositions for a treaty. The emissary arrived at Fort William in the third week of January, and found the Calcutta Council not indisposed to listen to the suggestion. A deputation was then sent to Calcutta and negotiations begun. It took some little time, however, to settle on terms; and then came the sudden collapse of the Nawab's campaign and his treaty with the English of the 9th of February.

That altered the situation entirely. The authorities at Calcutta now saw matters in quite another light. With the Nawab out of the way, and with Clive and the pick of the Madras army at their disposal on the spot, why should they not take the opportunity of ridding themselves of their most formidable trade rivals once for all?

It was considered politic, however, not to break off the negotiations with the French for the moment. The Nawab's sanction to the carrying on of hostile operations within his territories ought to be obtained. The negotiations with the French deputation were meanwhile protracted on various pretexts. Again the unexpected happened. Suraj-u-daulah's reply was a peremptory refusal to permit operations of war in Bengal. The Calcutta Council on that again



took up the question of a treaty with Chandernagore. It was duly drafted and made ready for signature, when Admiral Watson himself, as representing the British Government, intervened. The negotiations hitherto had been no concern of his. Now he was asked to sign the treaty. The Admiral declined to assent to any terms with the French. The French settlement at Chandernagore, he pointed out, was legally a dependency of Pondicherry, where any arrangement come to would have to be ratified.

At that moment, early in March, a fresh letter from Suraj-u-daulah came, in the form of an appeal for assistance against Ahmed Shah, news of whose capture of Delhi had reached Moorshedabad. In mortal dread of an Afghan raid on the rich plains of Bengal, Suraj-u-daulah offered Clive a hundred thousand rupees a month if he would march to his assistance. If Clive would do so, the English might have a free hand with the French. Two days after the receipt of the Nawab's letter at Fort William, a message came up the river that three ships, bringing a reinforcement of three companies of infantry and one of artillery, sent round from Bombay on the news of the Black Hole reaching there, had arrived in the Hooghly, and that the long-delayed *Cumberland*, with two hundred European infantry on board, which had had to put back to Vizagapatam, was at Balasore. Now all thought of an accommodation with Chandernagore, or of neutrality, was flung to the winds. The French envoys were packed off home with a curt message that parleying was at an end.

They might take it that war with Chandernagore had already begun.

Preparations for an immediate advance on Chandernagore were taken in hand forthwith, and pushed on apace. At the last moment yet another letter, the third, came in from Suraj-u-daulah, who had got over his alarm about the Afghans. The Nawab once more forbade interference with Chandernagore. But it was too late.

The formal declaration of war with France was read on board the flagship *Kent*, as the ship's log records, on the 14th of March. Here is the entry:—

“March 14—At an anchor off Calcutta. P.M. Cut up 373 Pounds of Fresh Beef. Punish'd Joseph Vatie and Thomas Holderness with a Dozen lashes each for Disorderly Behaviour on Shore and Read His Majesty's Declaration of War against the French King.”

Clive and his troops, numbering, with the reinforcement of three hundred men of the Bombay army that had been hastened up to Fort William, seven hundred Europeans and sixteen hundred “Blacks,” as Admiral Watson termed the Sepoys, had already crossed the river. They had crossed some days before—before, in fact, the French envoys had left Calcutta, it being given out that the movement was with a view to be ready to march off up-country and assist Suraj-u-daulah against the Afghans. Clive camped a little distance up the river, with the *Bridge-water* and the *Kingfisher* sloop to keep him in easy touch with Calcutta.

On the 15th the squadron began to move forward. It comprised three men-of-war in this order: the *Tyger* ahead, then the *Kent*, lastly the *Salisbury*. Following them came Clive's heavy artillery in flats towed by row-boats. The ships advanced towing and warping their way up for three days, until they came within sight of Chandernagore. Then they had to anchor two miles below Fort d'Orleans, as the entrenched work forming the defence of the settlement was called. Until the tides became higher it was impossible to make further progress with such big ships. The artillery were now landed, together with a hundred and forty of the seamen, who were to throw up the siege batteries and fight the guns.

These moved across and joined Clive, who, since the early morning of the 14th, had been carrying on a skirmishing attack on the outworks of Chandernagore on the western or landward side.

At Chandernagore itself, meanwhile, during the brief lull before the bursting of the storm, the French were working night and day on their defences. The news of the breaking off of the negotiations had come on the settlement like a thunderbolt from an apparently clearing sky. Blank dismay fell on all, from the Governor downwards, when they learned what had happened. For days past they had been confidently looking forward to see the envoys arrive from Calcutta with the signed treaty in their hands. The envoys returned with the message: "Delenda est Carthago." It was a staggering set-back. But the Governor and his officers were men. They

set themselves to work with the energy of despair to make the best fight for it they could. Messengers were sent galloping off to the Nawab and to Cossimbazaar, where the French agent, M. Lawson, had a small detachment of picked Europeans, imploring immediate help.

Field works and entrenched positions were thrown up at the most exposed points outside the main fort, which constituted the stronghold of the settlement, Fort d'Orleans. Six trading ships were sunk across the fairway of the Hooghly, a hundred and fifty yards below the fort, to stop the English men-of-war coming up, and a covering battery, heavily gunned, was placed to enfilade the channel at close range and bring a punishing fire on any ships trying to pass the sunken obstacles. A double boom, moored fast with chains, was also laid across the river. Two bomb-vessels were anchored broadside-on across the fairway, close to the sunken vessels, and three fire-ships were made ready to let drift down stream on the enemy. Chandernagore Fort itself was a four-sided brick-faced work, two hundred yards each way, with walls fifteen feet high, constructed on the regular Vauban system, with a dry ditch and bastions, and a curtain between the bastions, and with a ravelin covering the main gate. It mounted ten 32-pounders along each curtain, and eight 32-pounders on the ravelin. Besides these there was a six-gun battery of lighter pieces erected on the roof of the high-terraced church of St. Louis, inside the fort.

To man his defences M. Renaud de St. Germain, the French Governor, had in all a hundred and forty-six European soldiers and three hundred Sepoys, with an auxiliary body of some three hundred Europeans, “men with muskets,” raised from among the Chandernagore traders and the crews of the French vessels.

Chandernagore in itself seemed capable of making a good defence, and the Governor, indeed, as his arrangements drew towards completion, was not without hope of being able to hold his own until help, of which at an early date he received promise, should arrive from the Nawab. Clive and his army gave him little anxiety — or comparatively little. The preliminaries of the attack on the land side showed that the French heavy guns on the ramparts had a command of fire that gave the defence the mastery on that side. It was the broadsides of the men-of-war that M. Renaud was anxious about. If only he could stand up against the sailors, he thought it possible to hold out until the relief he anticipated should arrive.

The British men-of-war in the river had to wait at anchor for four days until the tides suited their further advance. Admiral Watson used the opportunity to announce the declaration of war to the Governor of Chandernagore, demanding at the same time the surrender of the fort. Lieutenant Hey, of the flagship, carried the letter. The reply was an offer to ransom the place. It was refused flatly. Unconditional surrender, Admiral Watson sent

back word, were his only terms, though private property would be respected. To that the French made no reply, but pressed on with their preparations.

The interval was profitably spent otherwise. It so happened that the French officers responsible for blocking the fairway had either neglected to remove the masts of the sunken vessels or were unable to do so before the English squadron came in sight. Anyhow, they were left sticking up out of the water—in the cases of five of the six vessels—and showed what the enemy's plans in that direction were. Admiral Watson's first step was to remove the boom and the two bomb-vessels behind the line of the sunken vessels, together with the fire-ships. The boats of the men-of-war were sent up with muffled oars after dark on the first night after the arrival of the squadron and cleared these off, by cutting through the boom and sending the bombs and fireships adrift, causing them to run ashore and ground hard and fast. "Mr. Delamotte, the master of the *Kent*," relates Dr. Ives, "on the second day sounded between the sunken vessels, whose masts were above water, under continuous cannon shot from the fort, and found room for our ships to pass between."

Treachery, as the French afterwards said, enabled him to do this. One of their artillery officers, according to French accounts, had a quarrel with the Governor, deserted and sold the secret of the passage for a large sum to Admiral Watson. He sent the

money, so the story proceeds, to help his father in France, an aged and poor man, only, however, to receive back again the price of his treason, together with a bitter letter of reproach on the receipt of which the traitor hanged himself. On the other hand, Dr. Ives, on board the flagship, says nothing of any traitor. Admiral Watson in his dispatch simply says that he was delayed "until . . . I could further discover by sounding a proper channel to pass through, which the pilots found out without being at the trouble of weighing any of the vessels." There was hardly need for a traitor, and no need at all to pay for information with the masts of the sunken French vessels in the river standing up in the air, right across the bed of the Hooghly, for every man and boy in the English squadron to see. There was a traitor at Chandernagore, De Terraneau, an artillery officer; but he deserted to Clive's camp, and, useful as his information proved to the land attack, he knew nothing about the river defences.

By midday on the 22nd all was in order for the squadron to go forward to the final fight. The tides now were running higher every day, and the next tide would probably serve. That afternoon Rear-Admiral Pocock (afterwards Sir George, and a very distinguished commander), the Second in Command of the East Indies squadron, came up the Hooghly rowing up from Calcutta in his barge. He had hurried up to join, in the hope of being in time to see something of the fighting. He had left his flagship,

the *Cumberland*, at Balasore, unable to enter the river owing to the same low tides that had during the past few days delayed the *Kent* and her two consorts in approaching Chandernagore. With Admiral Watson's sanction, Pocock hoisted his flag for the battle on board the *Tyger*, to lead the line.

At dusk that evening, as soon as it could be done without observation by the enemy, boats crept ahead quietly and lashed lanterns to the masts of the sunken vessels, so screened as to show their light only in the direction of the English ships. By means of these the ships were to be guided before daybreak next morning between the obstacles and across the danger zone where the French had marked the range, past the heavy battery that overlooked the sunken ships.

The order to go forward was given at daybreak. Within five minutes they were on the move.

Anchors were silently weighed between 5 and 6 a.m., and on the top of the flood tide the three ships, the *Tyger* leading, and the *Kent* and *Salisbury* in her wake, glided ahead through the water with the least possible noise. Apparently their getting under way was not observed.

Admiral Watson's plan of battle was to bring-to directly opposite the river face of Fort d'Orleans within pistol shot. The *Tyger* was to lead on until she came in front of the further bastion of the river face of the fort, the north-east or "flagstaff bastion," as it was called, and then drop anchor. The *Kent* was to anchor between the two river front bastions at the



north-west and south-east angles of the fort, directly facing the curtain and the eight-gun ravelin covering the main gate. The *Salisbury* was to post herself opposite the south-east, or St. Joseph, bastion.

As the *Tyger*, a few minutes before six o'clock, neared the battery covering the sunken ships, the French ashore sounded the alarm. Apparently they were surprised. The soldiers in the first battery merely fired a few rounds at the leading ship as she passed by, a dim spectre in the half-light, and then the men in the battery cleared out at a run, and fell back to join the main garrison inside the fort. For their part the three British men-of-war passed on for their appointed stations without replying with a single shot.

The main garrison now were quickly on the *qui vive*, and the south-east bastion took up the firing; but for the moment the light was too uncertain for the gunners in Fort d'Orleans to shoot with much effect, until the *Tyger* and *Kent* had nearly drawn up abreast of the fort. Then, however, they got their chance.

The French gunners took advantage of it to the full before the men-of-war were in position. As it were by signal, a tremendous burst of artillery fire flashed out all along the ramparts from end to end, from bastions and curtain and ravelin. The tornado of iron beat on the *Tyger* heavily, but she stood up to it, forging her way ahead stolidly, and then let go anchor within her allotted station to a yard. The flagship was not so lucky. She was following at a

half cable's length astern—a hundred yards—when, almost at the moment that the *Tyger* anchored, the tide turned, and began to race back, swirling down the river. It checked the *Kent's* way instantly, and she hung back at a dead standstill, unable to breast her way against it. At the same moment a heavy concentrated fire from the ramparts beat upon her, and the ship, reeling under the terrific battering, began to drift down, stern first. First one anchor was let go, then another. Both anchors dragged, and the big seventy-gun ship drove down astern right across the bowsprit of the smaller *Salisbury*.

The Frenchmen yelled and cheered and redoubled their efforts, and there was for a space intense excitement. Would the two ships collide and get foul? At the moment that the flagship first checked her way, Captain Speke had fallen severely wounded, with, close to him, his little son, a boy midshipman, acting as aide-de-camp to his father, who was struck down by the same shot and mortally wounded.

In a few seconds the *Kent's* anchors held, and the ship was brought up; but she had got into a bad position. The forward-half of the ship lay partially opposite the south-east bastion, with the after-half overlapping the southern face of the fort in such a way that some of the guns of the further bastion on that side, the south-west bastion, could play upon the quarters and stern. Most of the guns mounted on the ravelin and along the curtain of the river front could at the same time train on her bows with a raking fire, assisted by some of the guns on the

north-east or flagstaff bastion, facing the *Tyger*, some of which could be brought to bear. More serious still was this. The *Salisbury* had been pushed entirely out of the fight: had been placed practically out of action for the day. The channel was not wide enough to let the *Salisbury* tow ahead and pass the flagship, and the *Salisbury* had to anchor at a spot whence only one or two of her guns could engage. Thus it came about that the whole brunt of fighting Fort d'Orleans fell on two ships, the *Tyger* and the *Kent*, by themselves.

Not a shot, according to Dr. Ives, had so far been fired in reply to the enemy's "tremendous cannonade." The *Tyger* was waiting for the *Kent* to hoist the red flag. It went up as soon as the *Kent's* anchors held. "As soon as the ships came properly to an anchor, they returned it with such fury as astonished their adversaries." "Our ships lay so near the fort," says the doctor also, that "the musket balls fired from their tops, by striking against the chunam walls of the Governor's palace, which was in the very centre of the fort, were beaten as flat as a half-crown."

Clive's men were at work meanwhile on the land side. They had begun pushing the enemy hard on the previous afternoon, and had opened a brisk attack on the outworks before daylight that morning, under the pressure of which the French outposts fell back, until they had abandoned practically all their landward positions beyond the walls of Fort d'Orleans. Clive's soldiers after that occupied some bun-

galows that stood not far from the walls, from under cover of which they plied the enemy on the ramparts with a continuous fusillade of musketry, and with six light guns they had pushed forward. The soldiers, however, could make little further progress for the present.

“For three hours nothing was heard but an incessant roll of artillery and musketry, the crashing of timbers and masonry, the shouts and cheers of the combatants, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded.”

Describing the scene on board his own ship during the first two hours, Dr. Ives says: “The fire was kept up with extraordinary spirit. The flank guns of the south-west bastion galled the *Kent* very much, and the Admiral’s aides-de-camp being all wounded, Mr. Watson went down himself to Lieutenant William Brereton, who commanded the lower-deck battery, and ordered him particularly to direct his fire against those guns, and they were accordingly soon afterwards silenced.”

Then he relates this incident, which occurred on board just afterwards. “At eight in the morning,” says the doctor, “several of the enemy’s shot struck the *Kent* at the same time; one entered near the foremast, and set fire to two or three 32-pound cartridges of gunpowder as the boys held them in their hands ready to charge the guns. By the explosion the wad-nets and other loose things took fire between decks, and the whole ship was so filled with smoke that the men in their confusion cried out she was

on fire in the gunner's store-room, imagining from the shock they had felt from the balls that a shell had actually fallen into her. This notion struck a panic into the greatest part of the crew, and seventy or eighty jumped out of the port-holes into the boats that were alongside the ship. The French presently saw this confusion on board the *Kent*, and resolving to take the advantage, kept up as hot a fire as possible upon her during the whole time. Lieutenant Brereton, however, with the assistance of some other brave men, soon extinguished the fire. Then running to the ports he begged the seamen to come in again, upbraiding them for deserting their quarters; but finding this had no effect on them, he thought the more certain method of succeeding would be to strike them with a sense of shame. He therefore loudly exclaimed, 'Are you Britons? You Englishmen! and fly from danger! For shame! For shame!' This reproach had the desired effect; to a man they immediately returned into the ship, repaired to their quarters, and renewed an inspired fire into the enemy."

The end was in sight by nine o'clock, and it came within a very few minutes of the hour.

"In about three hours from the commencement of the attack, the parapets of the north and south bastions were almost beaten down, the guns were mostly dismounted, and we could plainly see from the main-top of the *Kent* that the ruins from the parapet and merlons had entirely blocked up those few guns which otherwise might have been fit for

service. We could easily discern, too, that there had been a great slaughter among the enemy, who finding that our fire against them rather increased, hung out the white flag, whereupon a cessation of hostilities took place, and the Admiral sent Lieutenant Brereton (the only commissioned officer on board the *Kent* that was not killed or wounded) and Captain Coote of the King's regiment with a flag of truce to the fort, who soon returned, accompanied by the French Governor's son, with articles of capitulation."

At the moment that the Governor hung out the flag of truce ("waved over their walls a flag of truce," in the Admiral's own words) the landward side of the fort was still holding Clive's soldiers at bay. The firing from the ramparts there continued for some little time after the flag on the Governor's palace had been lowered.

The formal surrender and giving up of the fort took place at three o'clock in the afternoon. Says Admiral Watson in his dispatch: "I sent Captain Latham of the *Tyger* ashore to receive the keys and take possession of the fort. Col. Clive marched in with the King's troops about five in the afternoon." The *Kent's* log notes this: "5.30 p.m. The Fort at Chandernagore fired 21 guns as a salute to H.M. Colours, after being hoisted half an hour before."

So Chandernagore fell. "It must be acknowledged," to use the words of Dr. Ives once more, "that the French made a gallant defence, as they stood to their guns as long as they had any to fire.

We never could learn how many of their men were killed and wounded on the whole, though they confessed they had forty dead carried from the south-east bastion. The north-east bastion was also cleared of its defenders twice."

"The fire of the ships," says the Indian military historian Orme, "did as much execution in three hours as the batteries on shore would have done in several days." "Few naval engagements have excited more admiration," says Sir John Malcolm, writing three-quarters of a century afterwards, "and even at the present day, when the river is so much better known, the success with which the largest vessels of the fleet were navigated to Chandernagore and laid alongside the batteries of that settlement is a subject of wonder." Summing up results, Colonel Malleon says: "The capture of Chandernagore was not less a seal to French dominion in Bengal than it was the starting-point of British supremacy in that province."

Admiral Watson in his dispatch states the enemy's force thus: "They had in the fort 1200 men, of which 500 were Europeans and 700 Blacks; 183 pieces of cannon, from 24-pounders and downwards; three small mortars, and a considerable quantity of ammunition. Besides the ships and vessels sunk below, to stop up the channel, they sank and ran ashore five large ships above the fort, and we have taken four sloops and a snow."

Dealing with the casualties on the British side, Admiral Watson proceeds in these words: "The

*Kent* had 19 men killed and 49 wounded, the *Tyger* 13 killed and 50 wounded. Among the number killed, was my first lieutenant, Mr. Samuel Perreau, and the master of the *Tyger*. Among the wounded was, Mr. Pocock slightly hurt, Captain Speke and his son, by the same cannon ball, the latter had his leg shot off. Mr. Rawlins Hey, my third lieutenant, had his thigh much shattered, and is in great danger. Mr. Stanton, my fourth lieutenant, slightly wounded by splinters; but the greatest part of the wounded have suffered much, being hurt chiefly by cannon shot: Several of them cannot possibly recover."

According to the *Kent's* log the flagship had three lower-deck guns dismounted and three on the upper deck, and had 138 shot holes through her engaged side, besides suffering severe damage aloft to masts and rigging.

Next morning Chandernagore paid its formal salute to the victor. From the *Kent's* log: "March 24th, 10 a.m., the Fort saluted the Admiral with 19 guns." Then follows: "Fired 18 guns for the burial of the 1st Lieutenant Perreau." Lieutenant Rawlins Hey and Midshipman Speke died a few days later.

After a ten days' stay at Chandernagore, to rest the troops, arrange for the occupation of the place and the disposal of the prisoners, the men-of-war and the rest of the expedition returned to Fort William.

Further trouble with Suraj-u-daulah was looming ahead. The Nawab's troops that had started to intervene at Chandernagore had halted at Plassey and gone into camp there. It was less than a hundred



miles from Calcutta, and the authorities strongly objected to their being so near. There were no signs of any immediate withdrawal, although letters passed continuously to and fro between the Council and Suraj-u-daulah. Each side distrusted the other. Then began the series of intrigues between certain members of the Council and Clive with Mir Jafier and disaffected officials of the Nawab's *entourage*, which led to the battle of Plassey two months later. With the ramifications of the plot, the treachery of the crafty Hindu go-between Omi-chand and how it was foiled, our narrative does not concern itself, beyond the passing reference. Everybody knows the ugly story of the "White" treaty and the "Red"; one genuine and the other sham; one honestly signed at the Council table by Admiral Watson, the other with the Admiral's signature to it forged secretly, either by the hand of Clive himself or by some underling at his instigation. The battle of Plassey, from which the British *raj* in the East, by common consent, dates its rise, was the sequel, on the 23rd of the following June.

To strengthen Clive's small army the Royal Navy took over the garrisoning of Chandernagore for the time being; occupying the place with a hundred and forty of the flagship's men, under Lieutenant Clarke of the *Kent*. Communication between Clive's army in the field and Calcutta was kept open by way of Chandernagore and the *Bridgewater*, which ship was sent some miles higher up the river and anchored there.

Fifty seaman from the East Indies Squadron with a lieutenant and seven midshipmen in charge, accompanied Clive's army, attached to the artillery. Most of them were from the flagship, and one of the *Kent's* midshipmen, Mr. Shoreditch, was wounded in a hand-to-hand encounter with one of the Nawab's French officers.

More than that, however, the sailors had no small share in winning the battle for England. At Plassey Clive, as he said, put his trust in God. It was the sailors who kept his powder dry. It was their guns that did the work in smashing up the dense masses of the Nawab's levies in the critical second stage of the battle, after the deluging monsoon rain-storm that burst at noon, swamped the ammunition of Suraj-u-daulah's artillerymen. On such a detail as the smartness of Admiral Watson's handy-men with their tarpaulins and budge-skin powder-covers did the fate of the epoch-making day of Plassey practically hinge. Only after it had become plain with which side the fortune of the day rested did Mir Jafier and his corps pass over and throw in their lot with Clive.

Within two months of Plassey Admiral Watson was dead. The climate killed him in the end. For more than four months past he had been ailing, and for the past four months had had among his papers the Admiralty's permission to return home on sick leave. But, like Nelson during the last eighteen

months of his glorious life while watching the enemy off Toulon, he would not leave his post while there was duty to be done. The inactivity after Chandernagore, in the sultry, steamy heats of the rainy season in Lower Bengal, killed Admiral Watson.

A plain obelisk on a heavy square base in the graveyard compound of St. John's Cathedral, Calcutta, marks the Admiral's resting-place. It was erected by Mr. Holwell, the survivor of the Black Hole, during his governorship a few years later, and is thus inscribed :—

Here lies interred the Body of  
CHARLES WATSON, ESQUIRE,  
ViceAdmiral of the White,  
Commander in Chief of His Majesty's  
Naval Forces in the East Indies,  
Who departed this life  
On the 16th day of August, 1757,  
In the 44th year of his age.  
*Geriah taken, February 13th, 1756.*  
*Calcutta freed, January 11th, 1757.*  
*Chandernagore taken, March 23rd, 1757.*  
Exegit monumentum aere perennius.

Monumentum aere perennius? Hardly that. Modern India has no place for naval memories. Clive—and Clive only—holds the field.

Hos ego versiculos feci : tulit alter honores

—wrote Virgil once, in a moment of literary bitter-

ness. If it be given to those beyond the Veil to know of things on earth, and think, the Shade of the gallant admiral might well express itself in terms hardly less strong.

The East India Company erected a monument to the Admiral in Westminster Abbey, and King George bestowed a baronetcy of the United Kingdom on his only son—then a boy—in consideration of his father's "great and eminent services."

*Est procul hinc—the legend's writ,  
The frontier grave is far away,  
Qui ante diem periit  
Sed miles, sed Prô Patriâ.*

Is it too extravagant to suggest that, with things as they then were, with nearly five years of continuous war yet to come, and with enemies' fleets in every sea, Admiral Watson, a man young in years for his high position,<sup>1</sup> might, had he been spared, have well found opportunity for achieving yet higher fame, even wider renown? His, too, in 1757, was surely in a real sense a "frontier grave"—the grave of one

Who might have caught and claspt Renown,  
And worn her chaplet here :—and there,  
In haunts of jungle-poisoned air,  
The flame of life went wavering down.

The flagship *Kent*, it so happened, did not long outlast her chief. She had for some time past shown signs of being nearly worn out, and an official survey of her, shortly after Admiral Watson's

<sup>1</sup> Nelson was forty-seven when he fell; three years older than Admiral Watson was at his death. They were both also Vice-Admirals of the White.

death, resulted in her condemnation as unfit for sea. She was "cast" and ordered to be broken up, and on the 15th of September, a month all but a day from the death of her Admiral, the pennant was hauled down on board the *Kent*—still lying off Fort William—and the ship's company were paid off and drafted into the *Cumberland*, *Tyger*, and *Salisbury*.

So with the passing of the Admiral and his ship our story reaches its end.

Chandernagore, of course, is nowadays a French possession, a tiny territory of three and a half square miles, with a railway station on the line to Calcutta, where very few people ever get out. It was restored to France six years after Admiral Watson took it, for no particular reason it would appear, except that there had been a General Election in England, and the new Ministry was desirous of reversing the policy of its predecessors. Our beaten enemies got back almost everything that the valour of our sailors and soldiers had won for England, in order that the Treasury Bench might score a point in party politics. But we for our part have no right to throw stones. We of the present day have seen much the same thing happen elsewhere. Chandernagore has been twice retaken since 1763, and twice given back. It was finally handed back to France in 1816, after the Napoleonic War, the Foreign Office being under the impression—so, at any rate, the story goes—that it was one of the West India islands!

## IV

### BOSCAWEN'S BATTLE :—

#### THE TAKING OF THE *TÉMÉRAIRE*

Over the seas and far away  
"Old Dreadnought" steers to his fight to-day !

ONE of the best known of all our man-of-war names reappears on the roll of the British fleet in the name *Téméraire*, now borne by one of our new giant 18,000-ton battleships of the *Dreadnought* type. This is the story of how it came to be a British battleship name in the first place, the story of the act of war which in the sequel led to that historic man-of-war the "Fighting" *Téméraire* figuring on another day among the ships of Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar, to fight there as the *Victory*'s chief supporter in the fiercest of the fray.

How we came to have a *Téméraire* in the British Navy the name of course bears on its face. It was originally borne by one of Louis the Fourteenth's men-of-war, and at the date of its adoption by capture into the British service, in 1759—"The Wonderful Year"—had been honourably known in the French Navy for upwards of ninety years. The first

*Téméraire* to sail the seas was so named, it would appear, by the Grand Monarque himself, the name being appointed to a man-of-war of fifty-two guns, built by contract in Holland for the French service, in the year 1668, when a war with England seemed at hand. King Louis, it is said, further appointed to the *Téméraire* on her naming, as a special and distinctive figure-head, an elaborately carved and gorgeously coloured effigy of himself in his celebrated "Lion's Mane" wig, sworded and spurred and wearing a military *just-au-corps* tunic of cloth of gold over a scarlet vest with crimson breeches and crimson stockings—the orthodox attire of a French sea officer of the *Grand Corps*.

This first French *Téméraire* was a ship that the British Navy of her time saw something of. She formed one of the men-of-war present with the allied French squadron which played so very peculiar a part when attached to the Duke of York's fleet in the battle of Solebay in 1672, and in the same way also she was present at Prince Rupert's three drawn battles with De Ruyter in the following year. As an enemy a few years later, the first French *Téméraire* fought against us both at Beachy Head and in the battle off Cape Barfleur, after which the *Téméraire* escaped and found refuge under the harbour batteries of St. Malo.

"*The Rash*" is what an official return on the French Navy, presented to Parliament on the 9th of February, 1698, calls the *Téméraire*, in accordance with the custom then in vogue of translating foreign

men-of-war names appearing in British official documents. It seems a curious disguise for the name *Téméraire* perhaps, although even then it is hardly so grotesque as the names under which some of the *Téméraire's* consorts figure in various House of Commons returns: "*The Without Danger*," for instance, for *Le Sans Pareil*; "*The Undertaker*" or "*The Understanding*" (as two different official lists give it) for *L'Entreprenante*, another ship; "*The Jolly*" for *Le Joli*; "*The Fire*" for *Le Fier*; "*The Fiddle*" for *La Fidelle*, a frigate; the "*Turkish Lady*" for another frigate, *La Turquoise*, and so on.

Two years after Barfleur—on the 28th of November, 1694—a crippled French man-of-war was met with, a few miles to the south of the Lizard, by the British man-of-war *Montagu*. She had been dismasted in a storm out in the Atlantic and was nearly waterlogged and sinking; and after a few shots in reply to the *Montagu's* challenging gun hauled her colours down. The enemy's ship was the "*Timmeraire*, of fifty-six guns," in the words of the *Montagu's* log. They found it impossible to save the prize, either to rig jury masts or to take her in tow, as the weather came on thick and stormy, and in the end cleared the crew out, and on the 3rd of December abandoned the ship and set her on fire. That was the end of the first French *Téméraire*.

Two other *Téméraires* followed in the French Navy, and then we come to the ship that became our own first *Téméraire*. This was the *Téméraire*, of seventy-four guns, built in 1748, which, after fight-



ing against us in the battle which cost Admiral Byng his life, became prize of war three years later to the man whose hand signed the order for Byng's firing party, Admiral Boscawen, on the day of Boscawen's defeat of the French Toulon fleet in Lagos Bay, on Monday, the 19th of August, 1759.

The taking of our future first *Téméraire* was one result of the determined attempt at the invasion of England that the French made in 1759. They had prepared a large army, and transports were assembled to carry it across the Channel as soon as their Toulon fleet, by coming round and joining hands with their Brest fleet, had given France the command of the Channel by providing a sufficient force, as the French counted, to hold the British fleet in check, and see the expedition safely over. To leave port, however, was what the French Toulon fleet—among which was the *Téméraire*—could not do and would not try, until the British force blockading Toulon under Admiral Boscawen was out of the way. The Brest fleet, at the same time, watched closely by Hawke's powerful fleet, as a mouse in its hole is watched by a cat, could not put to sea with hope of success unless the Toulon fleet evaded Boscawen and joined hands with it.

Chance threw an opportunity of escape in the way of the *Téméraire* and her consorts. Various reasons—damage to three of his ships in a somewhat venturesome attack on some outlying vessels of the French fleet anchored under the batteries that guarded the entrance to Toulon Roads, and a

general want of water and provisions on board all his ships—induced Boscawen, in the last week of July, to withdraw temporarily to Gibraltar. De la Clue, the French Admiral, on learning by chance where Boscawen had gone and why, snatched at the offered occasion to make his sally. He put to sea on the 5th of August, determined to risk the passage round.

The fortune of war at the outset, and for nearly half-way, made a show of favouring the French. They managed to escape being sighted by the frigates that Boscawen had posted on the look-out between Malaga and the Straits. Not an English sail was sighted ; nothing to cause disquietude happened, until just as de la Clue's ships were in the act of passing Gibraltar.

With a brisk Levanter blowing over their taffrails and a thick haze on the sea, towards dusk on Saturday evening, the 17th of August, the Toulon fleet, after standing well over to the Barbary shore so as to give Boscawen's ships at Gibraltar the go-by, was being carried rapidly past where the British fleet was lying, when suddenly, just as the elated Frenchmen were assuring themselves of good success for the rest of their cruise, almost by accident, as it were, at the eleventh hour they stumbled on the only one of Boscawen's look-outs that they had yet to pass. Just off Ceuta, a little to the eastward of that place, the *Gibraltar*, a twenty-gun ship, quite unexpectedly to both sides, loomed out of the mist close alongside the passing French fleet.

The mischief, from the French point of view, was done. The captain of the *Gibraltar* realized at once that the strange fleet he saw heading out of the Mediterranean and close at hand could only be the enemy from Toulon. He promptly went about and hauled in for the Spanish coast, firing signal guns of alarm. The French for their part seemed to have been too much taken aback to act. As much surprised at the meeting apparently as was Captain McCleverty of the *Gibraltar* himself, Admiral de la Clue made no effort to stop or to silence the tell-tale British scout, although he might have done so. He simply contented himself with putting out all his lights, and then he continued to stand on with all sail set, heading west-north-west, so as to get clear away and out into the Atlantic.

It was indeed the slip 'twixt the cup and the lip for the *Téméraire's* Admiral. When, at half-past seven that evening, the alarm guns of the frigate *Gibraltar* were heard, and the ship herself came into the bay to report what she had seen, practically half Boscawen's fleet of fourteen ships were undergoing refit, lying with sails unbent and topmasts struck. The energy of the British Admiral and his captains recovered the situation for England. Taken at a disadvantage as Boscawen's fleet was, all hands turned to with such smartness that within two hours of the alarm guns being first heard every ship in Boscawen's command was in sea-going trim, ready for the order to weigh anchor. Before ten that night, within two and a half hours of the *Gibraltar* coming in, every

line-of-battle ship of the British Fleet was at sea, together with two frigates and a fireship, heading through the Straits in chase of the French under all sail.

They had their reward before many hours had passed.

At seven next morning, when off Cape Trafalgar, Boscawen got sight—although for the moment they were far ahead—of the French fleet: what bad seamanship during the night had left of it. No fewer than five ships of de la Clue's original fleet of twelve had parted company with their Admiral and gone astray in the night after getting out of the Straits. They straggled and dropped astern, and found themselves in the morning out of sight, some leagues distant from their flagship and only off Cadiz.

This again led to a disastrous mistake on the part of the French Admiral. De la Clue, when about seven o'clock he first sighted the leading ships of Boscawen's fleet in the distance, coming up astern, took them for his own missing five, and hove-to his whole fleet to give them time to join. Worse still: after waiting awhile for them he went about and actually stood back slowly to meet them—seven French men-of-war in war time bearing up for fourteen English! He refused to believe that Boscawen could possibly have got out of Gibraltar so quickly. The French Admiral, in fact, held on towards the advancing enemy until, when escape had become impossible, on finding his private signals unanswered,

the horrifying truth of the situation dawned on the unfortunate de la Clue.

It was then too late.

He turned and ran for it. He would try and out-sail his pursuers if he could ; if not he would seek a refuge and shelter in some neutral Portuguese port. Boscawen followed promptly, clearing for action as he neared, and catching up the enemy all the morning hand over hand.

At noon, a fresh gale helping Boscawen along, he was almost within gunshot of the French. At two in the afternoon his headmost ships were near enough to open a long-range fire.

All that Sunday afternoon a running fight went on, protracted by the wind suddenly dying away to nearly a calm. The rearmost of the French squadron, the *Centaure*, a ship of seventy-four guns, practically held the leading pursuers in check during most of that time. Nothing could be more courageous than the *Centaure's* defence, regardless of the odds against her. Until nearly nightfall she kept Boscawen's leading ships from closing on her and her consorts. The *Centaure*, under orders to cover the retreat, exchanged a never-ceasing cannonade with the ships of the English van for five hours, the fight becoming hotter and ever closer until just before sunset. Then at length, with her three top-masts and the mizen-mast shot away, and the ship herself so shattered and holed between wind and water that she was with difficulty kept afloat, the well-fought *Centaure* had to lower her colours. She had played

her part. She had gained time for her Admiral to seek the shelter of Lagos Bay. In so doing the *Centaure* had lost over two hundred men in killed alone, including her gallant captain, de Sabran. Although he had received no fewer than eleven wounds, he still kept the quarter-deck until he received his twelfth, and death wound.

A little ahead of the *Centaure* was Admiral de la Clue's flagship *L'Océan*, with the *Téméraire*, and the *Redoutable* and the *Modeste* near by, sailing in a cluster just ahead of her. All four had every now and then been assisting the *Centaure*, as now one, now another, of the English ships came within range of their guns. Away in the van of the French squadron were two more ships, the *Souverain* and the *Guerrière*, which were pushing on at some distance ahead of all.

To escape into neutral waters was the only course practicable to the French ships, and all they now aimed at, as they held on during the afternoon, crowding canvas to make land—the coast of Portugal near Cape St. Vincent—which soon began to rise ahead of them more and more distinctly.

A few minutes before the *Centaure* surrendered there was a sharp interchange of broadsides between the two flagships, Boscawen's *Namur* and de la Clue's *Océan*, both three-deckers. The *Namur* pushed past the *Centaure*, then plainly *in extremis*, within gunshot of his chief antagonist. Boscawen fastened on his chosen opponent and engaged the French Admiral hotly, until a series of mishaps for

the *Namur*, lucky hits on the part of the French gunners, temporarily disabled the British flagship by shooting down her mizen-mast and main-topsail yard. That forced the *Namur* to drop back out of action.

Admiral Boscawen, the story goes, at once quitted his crippled ship to go on board the *Newark*, a seventy-four, the nearest ship among the leaders in the British van, and had a narrow escape from drowning in his passage from ship to ship ; through a cannon-ball which struck his barge and smashed a hole in it. The Admiral saved his own life and those of the men with him, as it is related, by his presence of mind. The barge began to fill and would have sunk under them, had not Boscawen smartly whipped off his wig and stuffing it into the hole stopped the inrush of water, enabling them to keep afloat until they could get alongside the *Newark*.

There was little more firing that evening after the *Centaure* had made her submission, but the pursuit of the *Téméraire* and the other French ships coast-wise went steadily on.

All that night Boscawen chased, keeping the enemy well in sight, although, as on the night before, they showed no lights.

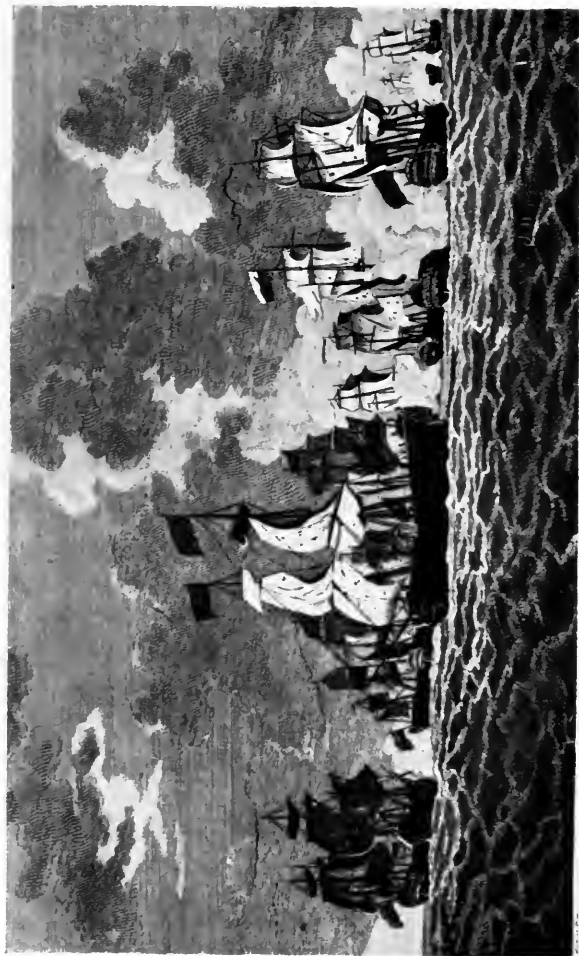
Early next morning only four French ships were to be seen. The *Souverain* and the *Guerrière*, the two headmost of the enemy, had altered course after dark. Being far ahead already, they managed to slip off unobserved and got clear away. The four ships still before Boscawen were in themselves, however, sufficient prize. These were now heading

in directly for the land, and were only a short way ahead of the British Fleet.

De la Clue was about to make his second mistake. Admiral Boscawen, he apparently imagined, would think twice about following him into neutral waters and attacking him there. But the neutrality of Portugal was of little account at such a moment. Might was right that August day for "Old Dreadnought." International proprieties notwithstanding, the British Admiral "in a very Roman style made free with the coast of Portugal," as Horace Walpole put it. Boscawen swept straight down after de la Clue, with his men at quarters and his guns run out.

The final phase opened about eight o'clock on the 19th of August, Monday morning, when the French flagship *L'Océan* was seen to run heavily aground. She brought up hard and fast, and the next moment her three masts went crashing over the side. Boscawen instantly signalled to the leading British ship, a seventy-four, the *America*, to deal with the French flagship. The order was carried out promptly. The *America* closed nearly alongside the wrecked three-decker and opened fire on her; whereupon the doomed *L'Océan* lowered her flag. In the brief interval before the *America's* boats, sent off to take possession of the prize, could board the French flagship, M. de la Clue himself, mortally wounded and with one leg broken, was hastily got away and rowed ashore, to die there a little later. Almost at the same time that *L'Océan* wrecked herself, the *Redoutable* ran on shore close by, breaking her back.





*The "Vainqueur" of the French, "Téméraire" of the English, and "Harcourt" of the British, in the battle of the Nile, 1798. The "Vainqueur" is in the center, flying the "Vainqueur" flag; the "Téméraire" is in the foreground, flying the "Vainqueur" flag; and the "Harcourt" is in the foreground, flying the "Harcourt" flag.*

Painted by Sturges.

#### ADMIRAL BOSCAWEN'S VICTORY

In the foreground to the right is seen the "Harcourt," attacking the "Téméraire." Boscawen's flag, the "Vainqueur," is in the center flying the "Vainqueur" flag; the "Téméraire" is in the foreground, flying the "Vainqueur" flag; and at the fore the red battle flag, the "Harcourt" flag, of the Old Navy.

Engraved and Published in 1799



There remained the *Téméraire* and the *Modeste*, which two ships, for their part, let go anchor close under the guns of a Portuguese fort on shore. The *Warspite*, a seventy-four of equal strength with the bigger French ship, was told off to deal with the *Téméraire*. She closed on her antagonist forthwith, in spite of warning shots from the Portuguese fort, and attacked at pistol-shot range. Hopeless as his case was, with no possibility of escape open to him, for upwards of an hour M. de Chastillon, the *Téméraire*'s captain, made a fight of it. Then having done all he could he gave up his ship. The *Modeste* surrendered not long afterwards, and so Boscawen's battle ended.

It was Captain Bently, of the *Warspite*, who gave the Royal Navy its first *Téméraire*. The story of that morning's work is told in the *Warspite*'s log :

"August 19th : 4 a.m.—Saw 4 sail of the enemy about 4 or 5 leagues from us, running inshore. The other two having altered their course in the night were out of sight. Continued chase and before 8 a.m. the French admiral ran ashore 6 leagues E. of St. Vincent. All his masts went by the board. Soon after saw another ashore, 4 miles W. of the French admiral, and his masts too went by the board. The other two anchored close inshore.

"9 a.m.—Little wind and fair weather. Admiral anchored 3 leagues from shore and signalled for all captains. At the same time signalled to the *Conqueror* and *Jersey* to chase N.W. *Warspite* brought-to.

"Captain Bently returned from the Admiral and

stood inshore for the easternmost of the enemy's ships at anchor. The *America* stood for the French admiral. Little wind, hazy. Great swell from S.E. 1 p.m. *America* anchored to eastward of the *Ocean*.

"We continued standing for the other French ships at anchor 2 m. to W. of the *Ocean*. Soon after a fort fired several shot at the *Warspite*, but hoisted no colours. Several of the shots struck the ship and did us some damage.

"We continued standing in near the French ship and fired a few shot at her, imagining she would immediately strike her colours; but finding she did not, stood on and tacked and came close under her stern, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 3 we began to engage her:  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 4 she struck.

"At that time the Vice-Admiral with the *Jersey*, *Guernsey*, and *St. Albans* stood in to westward of us after another ship on shore and fired some guns, when she struck; after which they set her on fire and stood in towards the Cape where another French ship was at anchor which they brought off. On our beginning to fire, the *America* fired some guns on the *Ocean*: she instantly hauled down her colours.

"We sent a boat on board and took possession of our prize, which proved to be the *Téméraire*, 74 guns, 716 men. At  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 5 we cut her cables and carried her down to the Admiral.

"In the evening the *Intrepid* and *America* set fire to the *Ocean*."

Boscawen, with his work accomplished and the Toulon fleet accounted for, sailed away for England,

carrying the *Téméraire* and the *Modeste* with him under British colours, to add both ships, in their original French names, to the British Navy. His battle in Lagos Bay under the shadow of the cliffs of Cape St. Vincent, if perhaps few people nowadays remember it, perhaps have ever heard of it, yet, in the words of Captain Mahan, "saved England from invasion," and the *Téméraire's* name should always stand for us as a memento of that fact.

At the time the event made a widespread impression throughout Europe. It caused great enthusiasm, as we are told, in the camps of the allied armies fighting the French beyond the Rhine, and was honoured by a cannon salute. "We were entertained," wrote a British officer in the army which had just fought at Minden, "with a *feu de joie* within hearing of the French camp, in honour of Admiral Boscawen's success against the Toulon squadron."

The little difficulty with Portugal that ensued was settled amicably. The elder Pitt, then Prime Minister, had his own way of dealing with matters that would upset the feebler nerved politicians of our modern House of Commons. The Opposition in the House tried, of course, to make party capital over Boscawen's breach of Portuguese neutrality. "Very true," was all the answer Pitt deigned to make, "but the enemy's ships were burned." He sent Lord Kinnoull to Lisbon with a polite expression of regret at the unavoidable necessity of the case, and the incident was not heard of again.

For many years after her capture by Boscawen the *Téméraire* was reckoned one of the finest seventy-fours in King George's service, and among the "crack" ships of the British Navy. She served England both in European waters and across the Atlantic, with all the most notable admirals of the time—with Hawke and Boscawen himself; in the Channel Fleet blockading Brest; and under Keppel, Rodney, and Pocock in the West Indies. After being for nearly twenty years in commission, the old war-prize in her closing days—at the beginning of the war with France and Spain, when the two nations combined against England to assist the rebel American colonists—was converted into a floating-battery hulk for harbour defence, on which duty our first *Téméraire* ended her career. In June, 1784, she was sold out of the service for breaking up.

That is the story of our first *Téméraire*, the immediate predecessor of the famous "Fighting" *Téméraire* of Trafalgar fame, which formed the subject of Turner's masterpiece.

One battleship of our ironclad fleet has borne the name. That was the *Téméraire* which was with Sir Geoffrey Hornby when he passed the Dardanelles in 1878. She took part also at the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, and still exists, converted for use as a floating workshop at Devonport, under the unrecognizable label of *Indus II*.

Our new "improved *Dreadnought*" *Téméraire* of 1907 is the fourth bearer of the name under the British flag.

## V

### HAWKE'S FINEST PRIZE :—

#### HOW THE *FORMIDABLE* CHANGED HER FLAG

The guns that should have conquered us they rusted on the shore,  
The men that would have mastered us they drummed and marched  
no more,

For England was England, and a mighty brood she bore—  
When Hawke came swooping from the West !

**H**OW the British Navy came by its first *Formidable* man-of-war, the predecessor in the direct line of the fine first-class battleship, the *Formidable* of our modern Navy, is one of the most exciting tales in our naval annals. It serves too to commemorate one of the most brilliant victories ever won at sea—the dashing encounter on that eventful winter's afternoon in the Bay of Biscay, “When Hawke came swooping from the West” :—

'Twas long past noon of a wild November day  
When Hawke came swooping from the West ;  
He heard the breakers thundering in Quiberon Bay,  
But he flew the flag for battle, line abreast.  
Down upon the quicksands, roaring out of sight,  
Fiercely beat the storm-wind, darkly fell the night.  
But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's  
glare for light,  
When Hawke came swooping from the West.

How the *Formidable* passed that day from France to England is, indeed, something of which both England and France may be jointly proud. Never fought men more heroically on both sides—the enemy to keep, we to take—amid all the horrors of a furious storm and ever imminent shipwreck and catastrophe.

This is the story of how, where, and when the Royal Navy won its first *Formidable*, the first of a famous line.

It was the afternoon of the 20th of November, 1759, a Tuesday. The scene was among the black-fanged reefs of granite rock, and the treacherous quicksands that fringe the “sickle-shaped sweep” of Quiberon Bay on the coast of the Morbihan, in Lower Brittany, in the north-eastern quarter of the Bay of Biscay. The battle was fought in the height of a wild raging storm from the Atlantic, a tremendous gale from the north-west, howling blasts of wind, and torrents of hissing rain, and thick, dark weather, with the sea lashed to fury all round, and gigantic breakers running “so high that no boat could live for a moment among them,” as one who was present described. “A network of shoals and sandbanks” is what a French writer calls Quiberon Bay, “with heavy surf breaking along the shore on the calmest days of summer, and ugly cross-currents swirling to and fro with the strength and rush of a mill race”; a place “lined with reefs that the navigator never sees without alarm, and never passes without emotion.”

Hawke and his captains swept down on the



French fleet, cornered between the storm and the shore, in the midst of the rocks and quicksands ; without charts themselves, and for the most part without pilots, or, at least, pilots that they could trust ; flinging themselves on the enemy heedless of gale and breakers, attacking ship after ship of the French as each was met with, "to make," in Hawke's own expressive words, "downright work of them."

De Conflans, Maréchal de France, commanded the French Fleet. He was one of a batch of eight marshals created, *honoris causa*, some two years before ; a boon companion of royalty, one of the "flying tables" set, a fine figure of a man to look at, as his portrait at Versailles shows him, handsome, tall, and well made, a hard rider to hounds at Compiègne or Fontainebleau, with a pretty wit in the boudoir and over the card table ; also one of the Pompadour's courtier friends, which was perhaps the main reason why a man of de Conflans' stamp as a naval officer found himself in chief command at that place that day. There were marshals of the French Navy as well as of the army under the *ancien régime*. The rank was first instituted by Louis XIV when he solaced Admiral Tourville with the *bâton* and its consequences—a big salary, the title of "Monseigneur," and court precedence at the head of the Grand Officers of State—to make up for his ill-fortune at La Hogue.

As an admiral Conflans proved an utter failure. That morning, when he first, some forty miles to westward of Belleisle, saw Hawke approaching, he

formed line and brought-to. He would fight the English, he said, in the open sea to the south of Belleisle. As Hawke came nearer, when it was too late, he changed his mind and ran off pellmell to take shelter among the reefs and shoals of Quiberon. With Conflans were de Beauffremont, Vice-Admiral, the second in command, and the Comte de Verger, Rear-Admiral, the third in command, who had his flag in the *Formidable*. De Verger's squadron formed up astern, its place in the line of battle.

As Hawke's leading ships began to overtake the French the gallant Rear-Admiral shortened sail and dropped back. He would await his fate at what in the circumstances was the post of honour, as rearmost ship of all. There, practically single-handed, the *Formidable* bore the brunt of Hawke's opening attack.

Hawke's van ships caught up the rear of the French Fleet just to the south-east of Belleisle, as it was in the act of heading to round the Cardinals, a chain of dangerous rocks and outlying islets, and stand in for Quiberon Bay, then still ahead of them some eighteen to twenty miles. Conflans was that distance from his intended refuge when the first shots went off. Both fleets began to fight as they overlapped, the British coming up under every stitch of canvas which their masts could stand—"not a topsail was reefed"—the ships now wallowing in the trough of the waves, now plunging and rolling and staggering forward on the crest, while heavy surging cross-seas burst and broke in deluges

of seething foam over the ships' bows. So terrible was the weather that on board some of the British ships men were flung down on deck or hurled helplessly about and seriously injured and maimed. In one or two men were washed overboard and never seen again. The guns were double-breeched ; eight men were at the wheel in every ship. So on that awful November afternoon did Hawke swoop down to strike.

On the French side there were twenty-one ships—with Hawke, twenty-three ; but the French ships were on the average bigger vessels than ours, and carried heavier guns. That for fighting purposes in such weather gave Conflans the advantage. Another thing was this : all the fighting that day was done by barely two-thirds of Hawke's fleet. A full third of the British Fleet were too far in rear—out-paced in the chase—and were unable to come up in time to have any influence on the fortune of the fight.

Ship after ship of the advancing British Fleet as they reached the enemy attacked the *Formidable* hotly. First, the *Dorsetshire*, of seventy guns, captained by Peter Denis, an Irishman (Anson's dashing lieutenant of the old *Centurion* days), gave her a flying broadside as she swept by to windward ; passing on then and driving ahead, making for the French van. Then the *Defiance*, another seventy-gun ship, following fast in the *Dorsetshire's* wake, gave the *Formidable* a second broadside.

Lord Howe, in the *Magnanime*, a powerful seventy-four and a prize from the French on a former day,

came next. Thierry, best of pilots for that coast, was at the con. He had volunteered for the *Magnanime*, as he explained, "parceque le capitaine 'Owe est jeune et brave!" Howe as he came on meant merely to brush past the *Formidable* with as brisk interchange of fire as might be, and then push ahead like the others to wing the flyers in the van; but a shot from the French, as he came abreast de Verger, carried his foreyard away and checked the *Magnanime*. "Black Dick"—Howe's name in the Navy—closed with the *Formidable* instantly. He "bore down upon the Rear Admiral," in the words of an eye-witness, "and getting under his lee opened a most tremendous fire from his thirty-twos and twenty-fours." "Lord Howe, who attacked the *Formidable*," says Horace Walpole, "bore down upon her with such violence that her prow forced in his lower tier of guns." In the collision, as we are told by some one else, the *Formidable's* port lids "were wrenched clean away."

Ten minutes later up came the *Warspite*, Sir John Bently, the captor of the *Téméraire* in Boscawen's battle, who had recently joined the Channel Fleet. Hauling up near at hand, she joined with the *Magnanime* in the attack. The two ships were two of the smartest in all the British Navy, and under their terrific pounding the *Formidable* was dismasted and reduced almost to a wreck. "In half an hour," says our eye-witness, "they made a dreadful havoc in the *Formidable*, whose fire began to slack."

De Verger's flag, though, still flew defiantly, as

did the French ensign at the staff astern, although the gallant Admiral had already fallen, as well as his first captain (de Verger's younger brother), and most of the other officers, with, in addition, upwards of two hundred men. The Comte de Verger himself, we are told, was badly wounded at the outset of the fighting. He was carried below, and had his wounds dressed, but he refused to stay in the cockpit. He had himself brought up again in a chair and set down on the quarter-deck. There a little later a second shot struck him dead.

Standing up valiantly to Captain Bently and Lord Howe, the *Formidable* was as yet to all appearances far from being subdued. She was still gallantly resisting when a third British ship, the *Montagu*, arrived on the scene. Her arrival gave the Frenchmen a breathing space. In trying to cut in between the other two British ships and the *Formidable* she ran foul of both her two consorts and caused a serious collision. The *Montagu*, "instead of pursuing ahead, must needs run between Lord Howe and the French Admiral, and fell on board the *Magnanime* and forced her upon the *Warspite*; thus our three ships were entangled and totally prevented from continuing the action, but lay all of a heap alongside the *Formidable*, who might have torn them to pieces if she had not been almost a wreck herself." What made the *Formidable's* position much the worse was that she was practically isolated, cut off from the rest of her fleet. No fewer than seven French ships in her part of the line had refused

combat from the first. They had run off without firing a single gun—"sans avoir," in the words of the French naval historian Troude, "reçu un seul coup de canon."

It was now about three in the afternoon. By that time eight or nine of Hawke's ships had got into action, and were engaging the enemy as they overhauled them all along their line.

The pick of the French army meanwhile was looking on from the shore, as big a crowd of spectators, from all accounts, as ever watched a naval battle. Duplessis-Richelieu, Duc d'Aiguillon, Commander-in-Chief, watched it from the windmill of St. Pierre, as did from another point the Second in Command, De La Tour D'Auvergne, father of the "First Grenadier of France," then a schoolboy of fourteen. Along the beach forty regiments of soldiers, horse and foot, were looking on. They formed the army that the *Formidable* and her consorts had come to escort across the Channel, in the transports lying at anchor in Quiberon Bay, for that projected invasion of England with which all Europe had been ringing for months past. There they stood, drenched to the skin, all anxiously looking out over the tumbling waste of waters to see what was to come of it; motley masses of men crowding out of camp and massed along the sand dunes and rock ledges of the Quiberon peninsula, or lining the batteries and ramparts of the forts round the bay—

a medley of cocked-hatted, white-coated officers and men from every arm of the French king's service; come down to the shore to see the show. Sturdy linesmen of Boulonnais and Contis, of Saint Chamond, and old d'Artois stood there—marching regiments these, that had seen more than one battlefield elsewhere, but never anything like this. Here were the red waistcoats of de Bourbon and de Cossé and de Quercy; there the green collars and cuffs of Beauvoisis, the blue of de Foix, the red coats with yellow facings of the Irish regiment of Clare; all intermingled with Dragoons de la Rochefoucauld and de Tessé; Dragoons de la Reine, in their queer-looking “bonnets de guerre” of royal blue; Dragoons du Dauphin in green coats with violet facings, silver buttons and silver lace, and helmets covered with leopard's skin; Dragoons de Mailly, and the long red cloaks of the Penthievre horsemen, adding a flower-bed touch of colour to the scene. Coast militiamen were in the throng, garbed like the regulars in the white coats of the line; heavy artillerymen, in sombre blue and dull red—there were two brigades of them on shore at Quiberon, de Chabrie, and de la Brosse—the whole mingled together in a motley crowd that stretched for miles round the bay, gazing their hardest to seaward and facing the gusts of blinding rain in their anxiety to see what they might of the battle thundering out in the storm over yonder. Quite a third of the “État Militaire de France,” of King Louis' army list, formed the audience for Hawke and Conflans on

the day that saw the *Formidable's* name entered on the roll of the British Fleet. The soldiers, indeed, too, had a personal interest in the battle beyond the general issue. Some of their comrades were on board the fleet with Conflans, doing duty as marines; among them two whole battalions of Saintonge, and a draft or two of the regiment de Guyenne. They had been shipped at Brest. Poor wretches! If it was bad for the lookers-on to stand here in the open, drenched to the skin and chilled to the marrow, what was it over there, out yonder—heaving and pitching and rolling, at the mercy of a raging storm, sea-sick and helpless and hopeless, and being shot at with English cannon balls all the while!

It was not until some little time after their collision that the *Montagu* and the two other British ships, the *Warspite* and the *Magnanime*, got clear of one another. By that time they had drifted to leeward of the *Formidable*, and were too far off to reopen their attack. But fresh foes for the brave de Verger's ship were soon at hand.

First of these the *Torbay*, Commodore Keppel's ship, a smart and powerful seventy-four, ranged alongside. Setting-to briskly by himself, Keppel gave the Frenchmen a cruelly trying quarter of an hour, after which the *Resolution* and the *Swiftsure*, both seventy-gun ships, drew near to take their part. Keppel, according to his own log, "had silenced



her," and without waiting to see her colours come down, as the new arrivals neared the spot he moved off, intent on finding a single-handed fight for himself further ahead.

Keppel did so immediately, and settled the fate of the hapless *Thesèe*, a seventy-four, the same size as his own ship, which went to the bottom with awful suddenness as they were fighting yard-arm to yard-arm, struck by a fierce squall that burst on her and heeled her over just as she had opened her lower-deck ports to leeward in order to give the *Torbay* a broadside. Swamped by a tremendous sea, the luckless *Thesèe* filled and sank like a stone. Out of eight hundred men on board, not twenty in all were saved, picked up from floating wreckage. The *Torbay* herself narrowly escaped sharing the *Thesèe's* fate. Her lower-deck ports had just been opened too. "Keppel's," relates Horace Walpole, "was full of water, and he thought he was sinking; a sudden squall emptied his ship, but he was informed all his powder was wet. 'Then,' said he, 'I am sorry I am [safe.]' They came and told him a small quantity was undamaged. 'Very well,' said he, 'then attack again.'"

The *Resolution* and *Swiftsure* were in turn joined by the *Revenge*, and then the *Essex* added herself to the long suffering *Formidable's* foes. Still, though, the *Formidable* kept her colours flying, while shot after shot—at intervals—came sullenly from her tiers of ports. She was practically silenced, but not as Keppel had thought, absolutely. There was

little satisfaction in such odds, and three of the British ships moved away, leaving the *Resolution* to finish the business off.

The *Formidable* was plainly at her last gasp, as it were; a wreck above and below, her masts down and her rigging lying in tangled heaps of torn canvas and cordage over the side, the bulwarks shattered to the level of the deck, the hull gashed with gaping holes from which streams of sea water spouted in cascades at every roll of the ship. Still, with all that, her gallant first lieutenant, the sole surviving naval officer on board, would not give in. The *Formidable* was a flagship, he declared, and, as a point of honour, to a flagship only should she strike. Manning what guns he could, he made his final effort to hold out just a little longer. It was magnificent, but it was hardly war. It was heroic, but it proved impossible. The gallant young Frenchman's ambition was destined not to be realized. There was no time for it. The big *Royal George*, with Hawke's blue flag flying out at the main, could be seen approaching, but she was not yet quite alongside. Before the *Royal George* could challenge, the deadly fire of the *Resolution's* guns had done its work, and all hope of further resistance was at an end. Yet another British ship also, the *Burford*, was fast approaching the scene, intent apparently on joining in with the *Resolution*. It was hopeless now to wait for the *Royal George*, and the heroically defended ensign of the *Formidable* had to come down. The *Formidable* lowered her



*The glorious Diver of the French Fleet was the name of the ship that was the first to sink, on the 10th of November, by a shot from the 'Formidable' sinking the 'Superbe' and the 'Resolution' (the ship coming up astern of the 'Royal George') in the background, lowering her colours to the 'Resolution'.*

Painted by Staring.

HAWKE'S VICTORY IN QUIBERON BAY

Engraved and Published in 1760

The picture shows the "Royal George" (in the centre) sinking the "Formidable" (immediately beyond the "Superbe" and in the background) lowering her colours to the "Resolution" (the ship coming up astern of the "Royal George")



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colours to the *Resolution*—exactly at five minutes to four o'clock.

Towards the end, Conflans himself in the *Soleil Royal*, with de Beaufremont and one of his captains, tacked and doubled back as if to the rescue of the *Formidable*, but they were too late.

What took place elsewhere on the scene of battle, during the short three-quarters of an hour that the waning daylight of the stormy winter's afternoon lasted, before the fighting had of necessity to cease, are beyond our limits. How, for instance, the master of the *Royal George*, getting anxious about the reefs and sandbanks that showed up amid the breakers on either side as they surged ahead into the fight, declared that he dared not take the big three-decker further inshore, and drew from Hawke's lips the heroic words, "You have done your duty in pointing out the danger; now go on and lay me beside the French Admiral!"; how the *Royal George* herself after that came within an ace of shipwreck as she fought; of the catastrophe to the French *Superbe*, sent to the bottom in attempting to keep the *Royal George* from closing with her flagship, by one terrific broadside from the *Royal George*, to the horror of the British flagship's crew themselves as the smoke of the guns blew off and they saw three topmasts disappear under water, "in a hideously sudden manner," where thirty seconds earlier had floated a noble man-of-war; how finally Conflans himself

sheered off before the *Royal George's* guns, and ran away to wreck his flagship and burn her next morning:—to recount in detail these and the many other dramatic incidents of that “thunderous miscellany of cannon and tempest,” as Carlyle called the battle of Quiberon Bay, are beyond our present scope.

All was over about five o'clock. As soon as might be after that, victors and vanquished alike let go anchors where they lay, each ship where best she could, as the guns gave over firing in the dark, to ride the fearful night out as well as it was possible on both sides, each holding to her anchor for dear life, and powerless to help others. “In the night we heard many guns of distress fired, but, it blowing hard, want of knowledge of the coast, and whether they were fired by a friend or an enemy, prevented all means of relief.”

As the result to England of the afternoon's work, two French ships were sunk and one was burned; two surrendered (one stole away before the weather would allow a boat from an English ship to take possession of her), one—the *Formidable*—was taken and secured. Of the rest of the enemy some scraped over the mud-flats at the mouth of the little river Vilaine, a few miles off, and lay there with broken backs, unable ever to put to sea again; a small remnant got into Rochfort, losing one of their number by shipwreck on the way. In killed and wounded and drowned, the total loss to France in the battle, it has been calculated, numbered between

four and five thousand men. It was probably nearer the higher figure, for most of the French ships were crammed with men. There were twelve hundred, it was said, sailors and soldiers, on board Conflans' flagship, the *Soleil Royal*, alone. A thousand officers and men were returned as on board the *Formidable*.

The French wounded, with a few men rescued from the ships that were sunk, were sent on shore by cartel to the Duc D'Aiguillon, as soon as the weather had moderated sufficiently. With them were sent also a hundred and twenty French soldiers, the poor remnant of a half-battalion of the regiment of Saintonge, and a company of militiamen gunners from Brest, who had served on board the *Formidable*.

Two of our own ships were wrecked in Quiberon Bay, one on the night of the battle. That was the *Resolution*, to which ship the *Formidable* had hauled down her flag. The other was the *Essex*, which was cast away early next morning while trying to secure Conflans' flagship. The storm continued to rage with unabated fury during the whole of the day after the battle. To Hawke, though, their fate was only part of the price for the risk incurred in bringing the French to battle.

This was the victor's summing up on the day's work. "When I consider the season of the year," wrote Hawke to the Admiralty, in his modestly worded dispatch, "the hard gales on the day of action, the shortness of the day, and the coast they

were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done. As to the loss we have sustained, let it be placed to the account of the necessity I was under of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy. Had we had but two hours more daylight the whole had been totally destroyed or taken, for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us." In this plain way did the victor of Quiberon Bay render his account to the nation, this grand old fighting seaman and leader to whom England has not yet found room for a monument, either at the Abbey or in St. Paul's.

The battle of Quiberon Bay sealed the fate of France at sea for the Seven Years' War. The building of "flat bottoms" stopped after that; there was no more mustering of armies along the French coast, no more discussion in the Pompadour's boudoir of schemes for the invasion of England.

The guns that should have conquered us they rusted on the shore,  
The men that would have mastered us they drummed and marched  
no more,

For England was England, and a mighty brood she bore—  
When Hawke came swooping from the West!

"It seems as though France is never to have a navy," said King Louis morosely, while sitting at supper with the Pompadour on the night that the Quiberon dispatches reached Versailles.

A British officer who went on board the *Formidable* on the morning after the battle, wrote down a



description of the scene that met his eyes there. "A lieutenant and 80 men," he says, "being ordered from our ship on board the *Formidable* to assist in repairing her rigging, etc., I embraced the opportunity of seeing the havoc that had been made by the fire of so many large ships who had battered her. The destruction of her upper works was dreadful, and her starboard side was pierced like a cullender by the number of shots she received in the course of the action. The loss of men was prodigious in killed and wounded, amounting to more than 500; among the former the Admiral, M. St. André de Verger and his brother, the first captain, all the other officers either killed or wounded, except a lieutenant-colonel, who assured me that every man of his detachment, drawn up on the quarter-deck and forecastle, etc., had been either killed or wounded but himself; that he had served in the army for thirty years, had been present at the bloody field of Fontenoy, but had never before witnessed such a scene of carnage. The grand-chamber was filled with wounded officers, many of whom had suffered amputation. . . . Monsieur major invited me below to certify the number of his patients, and there a melancholy scene presented itself. The large gun-room and every space between the guns on the lower deck was crammed with wounded soldiers and sailors, besides three rows of cradles in the hold, containing 60 seamen, and many not yet dressed. . . . I am afraid that few of the wounded could recover,

considering their very miserable situation and circumstances."

As soon as the weather would allow her to start the *Formidable* was sent off to England under escort. She arrived at Plymouth "almost in a sinking state, from the shot-holes she had received, and only kept afloat with great difficulty." She rolled away her jury masts, we are told, and the cook's coppers were washed out of the ship. The prize crew, the officers and men from the wrecked *Essex*, and the prisoners, had to live for four days on the boatswain's tallow.

The *Formidable* was taken into the British Navy, and the name was registered on the roll of King George's fleet in its original form ; but the ship had suffered too severe a mauling to be fit for sea service again. Some ten years after her capture Hawke, as First Lord of the Admiralty, signed the death warrant of his old prize—the order that delivered his old Quiberon trophy over to the shipbreaker.

One final word. The *Formidable's* magnificent defence was the redeeming event for the other side of the "Journée de M. Conflans," as the French Navy, pillorying the memory of its unfortunate Admiral, has ever since called the battle. So, too, France has recognized it. A new *Formidable* was laid down in France at the first fitting opportunity, so named in honour of the Comte de Verger's gallant man-of-war. The French battleship *Formidable* of to-day—not so long since, with her armour

plates of 44 tons weight each and 75-ton guns, the pride of her fleet, and still, as reconstructed, a ship capable of striking a hard blow for the honour of her flag—commemorates the heroism of de Verger and his gallant men for the twentieth-century French Navy.

## VI

### WHEN THE *VICTORY* FIRST JOINED THE FLEET

Thou great vessel, whose tremendous claim  
So well is proved to Victory's famous name !

**I**N stately guise, all smart and trim, rides the *Victory* to-day at the flagship's moorings in Portsmouth Harbour, flying at her mast-head the red St. George's Cross flag of the Admiral holding the chief command at the principal naval port of the British Empire. To see her now, spick and span and as smart as paint can make her, she looks at the first glance barely a day older than the latest launched of the old style wooden men-of-war that are yet left among us doing harbour duty in various capacities. The old *St. Vincent*, which passed away only the other day, a worn-out veteran, was launched ten years after the *Victory* had fired her last shotted gun. The still existing *Asia*, at Portsmouth, was launched thirteen years after the *Victory* had finally retired from the sea. The *Victory* as a fact had been some years afloat and had fought her first battle long before the great-great-grand-fathers of most of us were old enough to trundle

a hoop or spin a top. She forms in herself, indeed, a direct and actual link between our own day and the times of George the Second.

Two famous Admirals of the Seven Years' War time, Anson and Boscawen, were the Lords of the Admiralty who signed the order to lay the *Victory's* keel. The names themselves take us back into history well over a century and a half. And the difference between things then and now is wider than the gap of years. It is difficult indeed, as we nowadays see the *Victory* in Portsmouth Harbour, amidst the stir and activity of a modern naval port, to realize how wide a space her life-time really covers.

Imagine yourself as a visitor at Portsmouth on any afternoon almost of the present year of grace, and observing what takes place in the harbour round the *Victory*. Here comes along, sliding swiftly past between ship and shore, a long, low-built black torpedo-boat; or a yet more grim-looking sleuthhound of the sea, a thirty-knot destroyer, with squat funnels and high-raised forecastle, from which peers forward the long barrel of a twelve-pounder, shearing its way ahead on business of its own. Now a snub-nosed gunnery-school gunboat passes, returning from a day's target-practice out beyond the Warner lightship, with a weapon that can fire from twelve to twenty aimed shots in a minute. Then, it may be, a brand new twenty-three-knot cruiser passes,

coming back from a trial run, or a huge high-sided four to five hundred feet long battleship of from fifteen to eighteen thousand tons, stern and resolute of appearance, her giant barbette guns of massive bulk and enormous length, weighing each from fifty to sixty tons, and able to send an eight hundred-weight twelve-inch shell from fifteen to twenty miles, and with the certainty of being able to hit the mark with each shot at half that range—the horizon limit from on board. It was not so long ago that one of our battleships (the *Commonwealth*), firing at eight thousand yards at a target representing an enemy's battleship, dropped successive twelve-inch shells into a space the size of a lawn-tennis court, and, at the same distance at the third round, shot away a boat's flagstaff that topped the target. At all times, too, there is a passing and repassing of Navy steam-launches and pinnaces, and now and again the busy forging to and fro of puffing harbour tugs and yard craft of all sorts. Such are every-day sights in Portsmouth Harbour in these times of ours.

Then carry your mind back to the year in which the *Victory* first figured on the Estimates of the Navy—1758. Imagine yourself standing on the Hard as a sightseer in the Portsmouth of the Seven Years' War time—on, say, a day in October of the year when my Lords at Whitehall were making their final decision about the ship's dimensions.

At this same moment, by the way, there is lying in a far-off parsonage, in an out-of-the-world locality on the Norfolk coast, a puny baby boy, a fortnight

or three weeks old, so sickly that he is not thought likely to live. So weakly, indeed, is the child that his baptism—at which the name Horatio was given to the small babe—has taken place privately, just six days after his birth.

You would, in Portsmouth Harbour on that October afternoon of 1758, have seen something very much like this.

First of all, almost opposite the Hard, and just where the *Victory* herself now lies, there is moored a big yellow-sided two-decker of foreign build flying the British flag. Just now, perhaps, there is no man-of-war name all the world over of more unpleasant notoriety than hers. She is the *Monarque*, a seventy-four, taken from the French, and it was on her quarterdeck, some eighteen months ago, on a dull and cloudy March day, that they shot Admiral Byng. The *Monarque* has now just returned from "Straits" service, and if you went on board her you would see, still there, and part of the ship's company, the men of the platoon of marines who formed Byng's firing party.

Near the *Monarque* lies a big ninety-gun three-decker—a yellow-sided vessel also, for all men-of-war are so painted. It is the *St. George*. In her cabin Byng's court martial sat some twenty months ago. The court, by a grim coincidence, was held in the very cabin that had been Byng's own thirteen years before that, when Byng was captain of this same *St. George*. There, on a snowy January day, as plenty of people at Portsmouth can tell you, for they were

looking on, Byng stood to hear his sentence in his own old cabin, crowded almost to suffocation with spectators, stuffy and close, and the walls "sweating down" with trickling beads of water; the hapless, doomed British Admiral, standing there, firm and erect, with squared shoulders, calmly facing his judges, with his own sword lying on the table, its point turned towards himself.

To the very last, they say, Byng expected an acquittal. He had not anticipated, at the worst, a sentence more severe than a reprimand. So he himself said in the cabin of the *Monarque*, on the very morning of the 27th January, when the Admiralty Marshal came to accompany him on board the *St. George* to hear the finding of the court. He learnt the dread reality first as he came up the side of the *St. George*. At the entering port a personal friend, instructed privately by the President of the Court to do so, stood waiting to give the Admiral a word of warning. As he met his friend, Byng saw instantly from his downcast countenance and embarrassed manner that things had gone adversely and that the sentence was a hard one. "What is the matter," asked the Admiral, "have they broke me?" The bearer of the news, convinced that Byng had no idea of what was coming, hesitated and stammered. Byng stopped short. He gazed fixedly at his friend for a few seconds, and then changed colour as he seemed to take in the situation. A moment later he had recovered himself. Exclaiming in a calm tone, "Well, well, I understand: if nothing but my blood will





THE EXECUTION OF ADMIRAL BYNG  
*From a Contemporary Print*



satisfy them, let them take it," he passed with set countenance into the presence of the Court.

Beyond the *St. George* lies another "Mediterranean ship," just returned home—the *Revenge*, one of the ships in Byng's battle. It was the damning evidence of the *Revenge's* captain—Frederick Cornwall, now at home on half-pay—as they all say in the fleet, that settled Byng's fate. "If I cannot disprove what you have said, Captain Cornwall," exclaimed Byng, as the one-armed captain of the *Revenge* turned to leave the cabin, after a futile attempt at cross-examination on the part of the Admiral, "may the Lord have mercy on me." There is no need to go further.

If you could look round to Spithead from the Hard, you would see the old *Royal Sovereign* on duty as the port flagship. On board her it was that, on the morning of the execution, Admiral Boscawen put his signature to Byng's death warrant, and the order for the firing party. She is the oldest ship in the King's Navy, in which connection the *Sovereign* has other memories of her own. The great Duke of Marlborough named her at her launch in the year that William the Third died, and it was in her great-cabin, during the *Sovereign's* first cruise, that Rooke's council of war planned the swoop on the Vigo treasure galleons, which Vigo Street, in London, serves to commemorate. Some of the old ship's timbers, it is the fact, formed part of the frame of Charles the First's world-renowned *Sovereign of the Seas*, and were salved, by special Admiralty order, out of the

*débris* when the *Sovereign of the Seas* was burned at Chatham in January, 1696, by the carelessness of a sleepy bos'un's mate.

Out yonder at Spithead, too, at this moment, rides at anchor yet another veteran of our old-time navy, the *Royal Anne*. They have a really marvellous continuity of service, some of these ancient men-of-war. The *Anne* carries us back to the time of the Dutch raid up the Medway. She was launched as the *Royal Charles* to fill the place of the *Royal Charles* that the Dutchmen carried off. William the Third renamed her the *Queen*, in honour of his consort, and the ship kept that name until George the First came over. King George, having at that time his legal consort under lock and key in Germany, promptly renamed the ship. He called her after himself, *Royal George*—the first of the series. Three kings, indeed, have been present at this ship's various "christenings." Charles the Second was present at her first naming as the *Royal Charles*; William the Third saw her renamed the *Queen*. George the First paid a special visit to Woolwich when she received the name *Royal George*, and gave £300 to be divided among the dockyard men employed at the float-out, in honour of the occasion. The name *Royal Anne* was given to the ship only two years ago, when the present *Royal George*, Hawke's flagship in the Channel Fleet, was launched. She exchanged the name for that borne on the stocks by the *Royal George*.

Within sight from the Hard is an 80-gun three-

decker, the *Royal William*, just back from the capture of Louisbourg, Cape Breton. She, too, was launched as long ago as Charles the Second's reign, under the name *Royal Prince*, and she fought her first battle at Solebay, eighty-six years ago. She carried James Duke of York's flag during part of the battle, and Prince Rupert in turn had his flag in her in a later battle. William the Third gave the ship her present name, and under it she fought at La Hogue as Sir Cloudesley Shovell's flagship, not without distinction.

If one might dip into the future and witness events just one year later, the visitor to Portsmouth would then see the *Royal William* there again, and again just arrived from across the Atlantic. This time she would be in other guise—a ship “in mourning,” all over funereal black, with yards set to point in all directions—“a-cockbill,” as the old term went—and colours at half-mast, firing minute guns, and with a funeral procession of boats putting off from alongside to bear to the shore the body of General Wolfe.

Off the dockyard, on this October afternoon of 1758, awaiting their turn for repair, are two jury-rigged ships. One is a small, old-fashioned sixty-four, firing a broadside of some 540 lb. weight of metal. The other is a giant 80-gun ship of French build, and brand new. She is bigger than the finest first-rate in King George's service, a fair match for the new *Royal George*, and fires the tremendous broadside of 1136 lb. weight of metal. Yet the

little ship took the big one in a midnight battle last February. It was as fine a feat of arms as the Navy has seen. The two are the *Monmouth* and the *Foudroyant*. They have just come into port, and both show plenty of marks by way of battle scars. If you were to row round the *Foudroyant* you would find her, on her larboard side, where the *Monmouth* made her attack, battered almost to splinters. The fight lasted four and a half hours, from eight till after midnight, and went on for most of the time within pistol-shot. The *Monmouth* in that time used up four tons of powder and about ten tons of cannon-balls. At Gibraltar, where they repaired the *Foudroyant* to bring her to England, they had to plug over seventy shot-holes at the water-line—and two or three cannon-balls had gone through some of the holes.

One more word of the *Foudroyant*. It would seem as though, in the Portsmouth of these times, we cannot lay the shade of Admiral Byng. The *Foudroyant* was flagship of the fleet that Byng failed to beat, and Arthur Gardiner, who later commanded the *Monmouth* when she took the *Foudroyant*, was Byng's flag-captain. Captain Gardiner, after Byng's battle, it is said, swore that if ever he got another ship, however small, and met the *Foudroyant*, he would attack her and take her, or sink alongside. He got the *Monmouth* and met the *Foudroyant* and kept his word; meeting himself a heroic death on his own quarter-deck in the heat of the battle.

A second French man-of-war, taken on the same

occasion and also badly mauled—the *Orphée*, a smart 70-gun ship, prize to the *Revenge*—lies near the *Foudroyant*; also recently brought to England from up the Straits.<sup>1</sup>

All the day long there keeps on a continuous passing up and down the harbour of small war-vessels and dockyard craft of every sort. Here a fireship goes by, a small two-masted vessel, readily distinguishable by the heavy iron double hooks and grapnels that tip the yard-arms; and that little boat towing astern. The hooks are meant to grip and hold fast the fireship's destined prey as she sheers alongside. The fireship's crew set the quick match-train leading to the stacks of pitch-barrels and other combustibles all over the vessel, ablaze at several points just as they are closing the enemy, and the little boat is for them to escape in at the last moment. Now a bomb-ketch passes, a clumsy craft with masts set well aft and two heavy 13-inch mortars, trained for firing over the bows right ahead, set side by side in the fore part of the ship, where the foremast would stand in an ordinary vessel. A rakish-looking Portsmouth privateer, it may be, now comes by, towing a prize astern of her—some captured French "sugar ship" from Martinique, snapped up off Ushant. Then there passes, on the way to one of the guardships or "receiving" ships, a press-gang tender, coming in from a run along the South Coast. She has been out for some days to pick up hands for

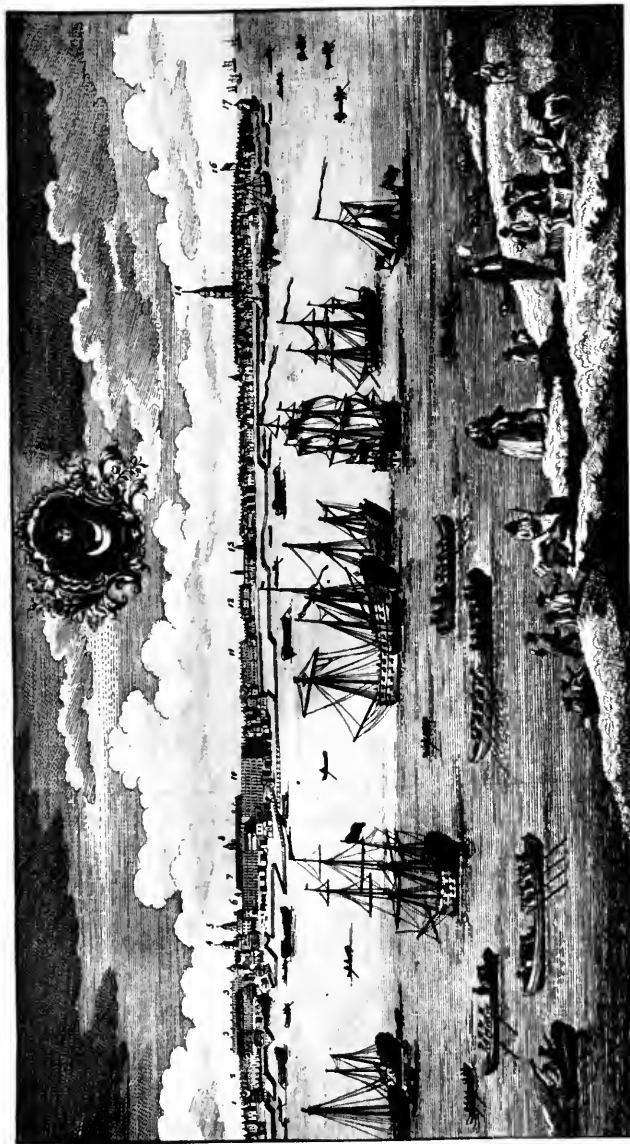
<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the *Monmouth's* midnight battle and Captain Gardiner's fate, see "Famous Fighters of the Fleet," pp. 16-35.

the fleet, and some of those on board could tell more than one ugly story of high-handed doings among the villages and farmsteads on the coast, within a night's march from the sea. In confinement under hatches on board, it is quite possible, is also the unfortunate crew of some homeward-bound merchantman, waylaid and boarded almost within sight of home, off the back of the Isle of Wight. It is very sad, but this is war time, and the fleet must be manned.

All day long duty-boats keep going up and down. Now it is an admiral's twelve-oared barge with the flag at the bows ; now a captain's gig, or a pinnace, pulling between ship and shore ; now a midshipman's boat scurrying off to answer the flagship's signal. Ships' long-boats with water-casks and pursers' stores for various men-of-war in harbour, pass and repass, and beer hoys and yard craft of all kinds. You can always tell a dockyard boat by the heavy way in which the " maties " row, giving their elbows a curious lift with each stroke. At intervals, also, ships' launches and wherries go past, and lighters carrying cables or anchors, spars and sailcloth, or gangs of shipwrights from the yard on their way to Spithead to attend to pressing repairs to some Channel Fleet ship or frigate just come in and impatient to be off again.

Now and again, two or three times a month perhaps, a line of ships' launches from newly arrived vessels from Spithead are to be seen following one another up the harbour, crammed with men—swarthy





1 North Dock  
 2 Boat-Houses  
 3 Officers Houses  
 4 Dock Clock  
 5 Commissioner's House  
 6 Sail and Mould Loft  
 7 Rope House  
 8 Royal Academy  
 9 Landing Place at the Dock  
 10 Rigger's House  
 11 The Common  
 12 Officers' Lodging in the Gun-wharf  
 13 Lamp-post Gate  
 14 Portsmouth Church  
 15 The Point  
 16 Flag on the Platform  
 17 Round Tower  
 18 Spit-Head

PORTSMOUTH IN THE YEAR THAT THE FLEET  
 JOINED THE FLEET  
 From a Contemporary Print.



foreigners, poor, ragged, dejected-looking wretches for the most part. Each boat has its guard of red-coated marines, standing under arms at the head and stern, all with bayonets fixed. The boatloads comprise prisoners of war, taken at sea and on their way to undergo confinement in Porchester Castle, going to join their two thousand compatriots already there. A favoured few in due course may obtain exchange by cartel, but the greater number must perforce endure their captivity to the end of the war.

Such were some of the everyday scenes to be witnessed in Portsmouth Harbour at the very time that the Admiralty order for the building of the *Victory* was being drafted.

Ashore in the streets of Portsea, old salts who had fought with Vernon when he took Porto Bello, are to be met with any day of the week. You may come across, indeed, an occasional old fellow who can remember Benbow, and how the news first came to England of the taking of Gibraltar. And sitting at his door on a sunny morning you may yet find an old Portsmouth grandsire here and there who can carry his memory further back still, and tell you how the bonfires blazed in High Street in honour of the battle of La Hogue.

<sup>1</sup> Visitors to modern Southsea, going over what remains of the old keep of Porchester Castle, will find scrawled all over the stonework of the walls of the upper apartments many names of the French prisoners of this time, with sometimes the names of their ships and the dates of their capture added.

Turn away now from the harbour and the Hard and take a short walk through the streets of Portsmouth town. Soldiers in the uniform that Corporal John's men wore at Blenheim and Ramillies, rub shoulders with you every hour of the day. Some are for Canada, some for the West Indies, some for Northern Germany. All are passing through Portsmouth on the way to the great dépôt camp in the Isle of Wight where the troops for oversea service assemble. Most are men of the foot regiments, with long-skirted red coats, red waistcoats, and red breeches with high white gaiters. Some wear the big cocked hat that came in with George the First; others the tall sugar-loaf grenadier cap of the Prussian pattern. Those with buff facings are "Howard's" men; those with yellow facings, "Kingsley's"; those with willow green, "Rufane's"; those with blue, "Duroure's." For six or seven years past our regiments have had numbers, but the men still hold to the old way, and each regiment calls itself for preference according to the custom of the army for these eighty years past. Now and then a party of dragoons pass through the streets, red coated and wearing black leather fur-crested helmets and long jack-boots. These come from one of the cavalry camps at Chichester or Southampton. Occasionally, too, cocked-hatted artillerymen are to be met with, in blue coats with red waistcoats and breeches and white gaiters.

Batches of men of the standing garrison of the Fortress of Portsmouth, the "Royal Invalids," as the

corps they belong to is called, are to be seen about the streets at all hours ; veterans drafted from off the Chelsea Hospital out-pension list as being sufficiently able-bodied for home-service fortress duty, old war-worn warriors bearing scars, many of them got in action at Dettingen and Fontenoy.

A Portsmouth visitor would certainly, too, have seen in and about the town a personage of some notoriety in those times : Governor Hawley, Commandant of the Garrison, the Duke of Cumberland’s hard-riding, hard-drinking friend. “Bloody Hawley” was what the soldiers called him, taking the *sobriquet* from the name that years before the hapless clansmen of the north gave the man who led “Butcher” Cumberland’s dragoons in the merciless chase after Culloden. In General Hawley you would have seen perhaps as badly hated an officer as ever held a King of England’s commission. “Chief Justice Hawley” the rank and file also called him : and the reason for it any one would have seen for himself by walking round Governor’s Green any day of the week, or passing beyond the postern and strolling out across the Portsmouth ramparts to the glaxis on an execution morning.

The talk of the place—and of all England too at the moment—is of a French invasion.

England, in 1758, had not yet recovered from her last bad fit of nerves, brought on by truculent vapourings from Versailles at the outset of the Seven Years’

War. Government was urgently pushing on arrangements for forming an efficient militia force to fill the place of the regular battalions fighting abroad in Germany and in America, in view of the invasion scare that was threatening in the near future. Already reports had come to hand from France of the building of flat-bottomed beach-boats and preparations for large encampments next summer in the vicinity of the French Channel ports—at Dunkirk and Calais, Havre and St. Malo, and in Lower Brittany on the shores of Quiberon Bay. In every county of England and Wales the local authorities were getting ready for the early muster of the new militia levies—now, for the first time in our history, to be formed into regiments. Along the coasts of Sussex and Kent, from Selsea to beyond Dungeness and Hythe, where the open coast-line might seem to invite attack—at Littlehampton, Brighton, Blatchington, Seaford, Hastings, Rye, Hythe, Folkestone—the sites for four- and six-gun batteries were being pegged out by military engineers, to be thrown up by local labourers under expert supervision. At every point along the seashore from Spurn Head to the Lizard the beacons were being watched night and day, while the local authorities of every seaboard district had standing orders to be ready, on the first alarm of a hostile landing, to transport the women and children in farm carts to the nearest towns, and drive inland the horses and sheep and cattle.

We have to turn over many pages of the world's history to get to the year that saw the *Victory* brought into the British Navy. The Seven Years' War itself, the exigencies of which called the *Victory* into existence, is nowadays but a schoolbook term. Frederick the Great, in the year that the *Victory* first figures in the Navy Estimates, was the man of the hour. Peter the Great's daughter ruled in Russia. The "Old Pretender"—the "warming-pan baby" of Whitehall, of the year 1688—was still alive, dragging out his last years in Rome as a pensioner of the Pope. Captain Cook was as yet an unknown master's mate, serving on board a man-of-war away across the Atlantic with Boscawen. Nelson, as has been said, was a long-clothes baby; Napoleon and Wellington were not yet born. The Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, Viscount Ligonier, was a French Huguenot refugee, born a subject of the Grand Monarque, who first saw war under Marlborough at Blenheim. Wolfe was an unheard of Major-General, nearly at the bottom of the list. News of Clive's victory at Plassey had not long reached England. The elder Pitt, "the Great Commoner," had only been in power for little over a twelvemonth. William Pitt was not yet born. Smeaton was building the Eddystone Lighthouse. James Watt was a Glasgow mathematical instrument maker, his ideas about steam hardly yet in embryo. Burke was a young Irishman in London, making a poor living out of essays for Grub Street magazines. Lord Chesterfield was still writing his letters. Dr. Johnson's

Dictionary was a new book, being advertised in publishers' announcements, in two bulky quarto volumes at £4. 10s. Garrick was playing nightly at Drury Lane.

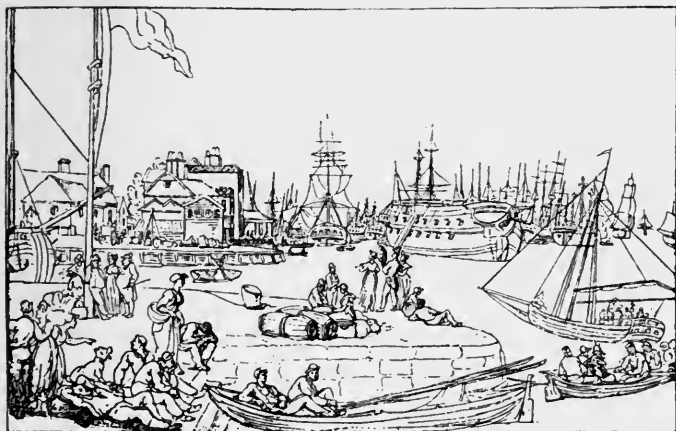
It was still the custom at Bath to announce the arrival of lords and ladies and " nabobs " with peals on the Abbey bells and serenadings by the Assembly band. Brighton was hardly on the map as yet ; it was merely Brighthelmstone, a Sussex fishing village, just beginning to be visited for sea bathing by the handful of people who had heard of it through Dr. Russell's pamphlets. Old London Bridge still had houses on it. Traffic in imported merchandise throughout the country was still carried on by pack-horse. One coach—or " machine "—a month, ran between London and Edinburgh, and took a fortnight on the road. A similar conveyance between London and Portsmouth took, under the most favourable conditions, two whole days. The mails went by postboy, and hardly a week passed without people failing to get their letters, because the local postboy had been stopped by a highwayman. Gibbets, indeed, with the bleached bones of these gentry in chains, stood on every main road out of London. Pirates were still from time to time publicly borne from the Old Bailey down the Thames in boats, heavily chained, to be hanged at Execution Dock and gibbeted at Galleons Point—on the average half a dozen a year. Just as the Admiralty draughtsmen were outlining the plans of the *Victory*, the news of the hour for nine people out of ten in England





*Thomas Rowlandson.*

AT PORTSMOUTH POINT



*Thomas Rowlandson.*

IN PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR



was the committal of Eugene Aram to York Castle for the murder of Daniel Clark.

On the day that the *Victory's* keel was laid two men were pilloried in Cheapside for blackmailing a City merchant, and a bad egg accidentally hitting the Sheriff's officer in charge of the proceedings led to a riot and fighting with drawn swords. On the day before the *Victory* was launched, one Mary Norwood, an unfaithful wife, condemned at Taunton Assizes for poisoning her husband, was publicly strangled in the market-place of Ilverston, her home, and her body tied to the stake and burned before several hundred spectators.

So far back does the life-story of our "old" *Victory* take us, touching at either end the middle of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, directly linking King George the Second with King Edward the Seventh.

#### HOW THEY BUILT THE *VICTORY* AT CHATHAM

This is the story of the building of the *Victory* at Chatham Dockyard, and how, why, and when the order to set to work on this particular first-rate man-of-war was given.

On the 20th of September, 1758, Lord Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty, after commanding at sea on Special Service off the coast of France all the summer, arrived in London to resume his duties on the Board. Nine days later, in the old parsonage house of Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk, was

born into this world the infant boy to whom six days later was given the name Horatio Nelson. The two dates are a coincidence of interest in our story of the *Victory*.

Anson came back to town to hold conference with Mr. Secretary Pitt, the War Minister. Pitt had laid his plans for the future, and was ready. There were first of all to be no more half-military, half-naval expeditions up and down the coast of France. They had done little real harm to the enemy, and in two cases had ended in downright failure. The wits of St. James's were not to get a second chance for a sneer that "the French were not to be conquered by every Duke of Marlborough" (an allusion to the general commanding the troops employed—the second Duke). The Channel Fleet was not to be received a second time on returning to Spithead with a dumb peal on the bells of Portsmouth Church. That plan of campaign had been to some extent a legacy to Pitt from the previous Ministry; he was prepared now to set on foot his own scheme. Great Britain would henceforward take the offensive vigorously and deal with the enemy at all points. Pitt's plan was to make it first and foremost a naval war, to attack the oversea possessions of France all the world over, utilizing every ship at the disposal of the nation. The striking success achieved by Boscawen at Louisbourg had shown the way, and what could be done.

The War Minister's projects made known to him, Anson acted. On the 14th of October the First

Lord called on the Navy Board—the Department charged with the general administration and dockyard business of the Navy—for a detailed return of every seaworthy ship in the fleet, and of every ship capable of being made seaworthy. On the 24th of October he called for a Supplementary Return of the older ships, which, if for the present available, would necessarily, through wear and tear, go off the effective within three years and need replacing. Both returns, from details specially supplied by each dockyard, were presented to the Admiralty on the last day of November. They were considered forthwith, and a decision in regard to them was come to on the 13th of December. Five days later, as the result, a shipbuilding programme to add twelve ships of the line to the fleet was laid, with the Navy Estimates for the coming year, on the table of the House of Commons. Nine of the twelve men-of-war proposed were to be put in hand at once—five in the dockyards and four in merchants' yards. At the head of the list was a new first-rate of a hundred guns, as to the preparations for which the Commissioner of Chatham Dockyard had already received instructions. That ship was the future *Victory*.

They were ready at Chatham. They had been expecting an order of the kind for some years. Ever since, indeed, the autumn of 1746, when the Admiralty had made inquiries at Chatham in regard to a new first-rate that it was then proposed to build at Chat-

ham, "in the room," as the official term went, of the three-decker *Victory*, old Admiral Balchen's ship, lost with nine hundred men and officers on board, on the Casquets in the terrible shipwreck of October, 1744. The project for various reasons had been shelved, but the dockyard authorities at Chatham had not lost sight of it. To that fact, probably, we owe it that the next *Victory*, when she at length did come into existence, lasted to fight at Trafalgar, and also, in some degree, that the *Victory* remains afloat at the present hour.

Any summer's day in the early Fifties of the eighteenth century the wayfarer among the uplands of the Kent and Sussex Wealds would have met processions of "tugs," as the local timber conveyances were called, drawn by teams of oxen, laboriously hauling along the rough oak trunks, lopped and barked, stamped with King George's broad arrow, and each numbered with a smear of red paint, that were in the course of events to form the frame and side timbers of the *Victory*. From Frant and Ashdown, Eridge and Mabledon, over all the wooded country round Tunbridge Wells where Kent and Sussex march, by Wadhurst, Buxted, and Mayfield, from Horsham on the north to nearly as far south as Lewes, they might have been seen working slowly along the clay-bound forest roads, two-and-twenty oxen to one trunk in wet weather sometimes, in charge of smock-frocked, leather-breeched Wealden peasants ("them leather-legged chaps o' the Weald"), toiling from cross-road to cross-road

towards Maidstone, where, alongside Messrs. Prentice's wharves, the Medway timber hoys for Chatham lay in waiting. Kent and Sussex oak was proverbial at that day as being without equal in strength and toughness for the frame timbers and sides and upper works of a man-of-war—the fighting parts of a ship. And, at the same time, the wayfarer in another land, wandering where the Vistula rolls its sluggish course northwards to the Baltic, would have met a great part of the rest of the future *Victory* in the long rafts drifting downstream from the oak forests of Poland and East Prussia, floating slowly along, to arrive at length at the Dantzic contractor's yard, and thence finally pass over-sea to the saw-pits of Chatham. For the under-water timbers and planking of our old-time men-of-war and other parts of a ship exposed to salt water there was no timber in the world, so it was generally considered at that time, to compare in durability with "East Country" oak—"K" brand, Dantzic," in particular. Also it was cheap. By the end of the year 1754 the pick of the best shipbuilding timber in England and in all Europe had been placed in store on the berths and racks at Chatham, available for the expected big ship, thenceforward to season gradually and improve in keeping year by year.

The order to the Dockyard Commissioner at Chatham to get ready to take the *Victory* in hand was dated the 13th of December, 1758. It directed Commissioner Cooper to "prepare to set up and build a new ship of 100-guns as soon as a dock shall be

available for the purpose." A sum of £3200, it also informed the Commissioner, would be set aside in the coming Navy Estimates for preliminaries. It was the custom at that time to build first-rates in a dock; they were thought too big to build on a slip.

The new ship—no name was as yet officially announced for her—was to be, as we should nowadays say, an "improved" *Royal George* (the *Royal George* was our latest completed big ship, the same *Royal George* that came at a later day to so unfortunate an end), and for six months the draughtsmen in the office of the Surveyor of the Navy, under the supervision of Mr. Thomas Slade (afterwards Sir Thomas), Senior Surveyor of the Navy, the designer of the *Victory*, were busy on the working plans. These were completed by the first week of June, 1759, and laid before the Admiralty. They were formally passed on the 14th of June, and a few days later the Rochester stage-waggon from London stopped at the dockyard gates to deliver the box with the duplicate plans, all ready to be laid off and chalked down in detail, each part of the ship the actual size, on the mould loft floor. Master-Shipwright Lock would then get his mould-boards and have the saw-pits set going, in readiness for the arrival of the regulation Navy Board Order to commence building. That order came on the 7th of July.

The dock allotted for the building of the new ship at Chatham was that then known as the "Old Single Dock," the dock now called "No. 2 Dock,"



near the Admiral Superintendent's Office and opposite the old yard clock and bell turret. There, on a Monday morning, the 23rd of July, 1759—an auspiciously bright and sunny morning as it befell—the keel of the *Victory* was laid.

The ship was to be afloat, according to Admiralty calculations, within thirty-three months—by the 31st of March, 1762. That meant, in the existing state of things at Chatham, working on her, at any rate during the earlier stage of getting the vessel into frame, day and night. They had two 90-gun three-deckers and two seventy-fours in various stages of building, besides the *Victory* to take in hand; and in addition they had nearly every week extra refits or repairs to undertake for ships coming in from the fleets at sea—a complication of tasks which involved the keeping of every man and boy of the two thousand and odd hands then on the muster-sheets of Chatham yard hard at work from Monday at daylight to Saturday at dusk. Half the establishment alternately were on overtime, working on Sundays and nightly through the week, for spells of three or five hours after bell-ringing—in dockyard lingo, “double tides” and “nights.” It was the same just then in all our dockyards; the day-gangs as they worked having each man's meals brought from home into the yard to him, to eat in the half-hour allowed, near by his job; the night-gangs all toiling on under the flaring light of cressets and links, without a break, until past ten o'clock.

Amid such surroundings at Chatham they began

building the *Victory*, a hundred and fifty men being employed on the ship at first, to set up and bolt together the various frames and floor timbers, and fit and fix together in place the stem and stern pieces and brackets and the huge rib timbers and beams, as fast as the converter and the sawyers could supply them. So things went on from August to the following January (1760). Then the gangs of shipwrights employed on the *Victory* were reduced, and the rate of working allowed to slacken down. With the French Mediterranean Fleet broken up by Boscawen—one half taken or burned and the other half cut off and shut up at Cadiz—and the French Channel Fleet shattered by Hawke, and its refugee ships lying broken-backed and stranded up the Vilaine, on the sandbanks above the bar, the stress of the war was past. And there was little need to trouble for the immediate future with only M. Berryer at the Ministry of Marine.

By August, 1760, the hull timber-work had been put together into the outline of a ship, and was practically complete in frame, the skeleton of the future man-of-war. The workmen were then almost all called off, and the ship, according to custom, was left aside for a space, to “stand in frame” and season. She had cost so far, according to the Navy Estimates, upwards of £14,000 in materials and labour.

Two months later, on the 28th of October, the Admiralty officially named the *Victory*. On that day their lordships signed an order that “the new

100-gun ship building at Chatham," as the vessel had hitherto been styled in all official documents, should take the name of the *Victory*. At the same time a notification was sent to the Navy Board, directing them "to cause the name appointed by my Lords to be so registered in the List of His Majesty's Navy," and "communicated" to Chatham Dockyard.

The name, of course, from the first had been an open secret. There were at that period seven British warship names which were tacitly accepted as set apart for first-rate ships of war. They were: *Royal Sovereign*, *Britannia*, *Royal William*, *Royal Anne*, *Royal George*, *London*, and *Victory*. These seven had stood at the head of the Navy List as a group by themselves, in successive ships, for some seventy years and more. The name *Victory*, in 1760, was the only one not appropriated to any existing ship. It had been wanting ever since the disaster of 1744, and the new 100-gun ship, as a first-rate, had a right to it in accordance with the custom of the service. Thus our present *Victory* man-of-war is linked directly with the old-time veterans of her name; thus, indeed, from the Armada to Trafalgar, in a line of continuous succession—

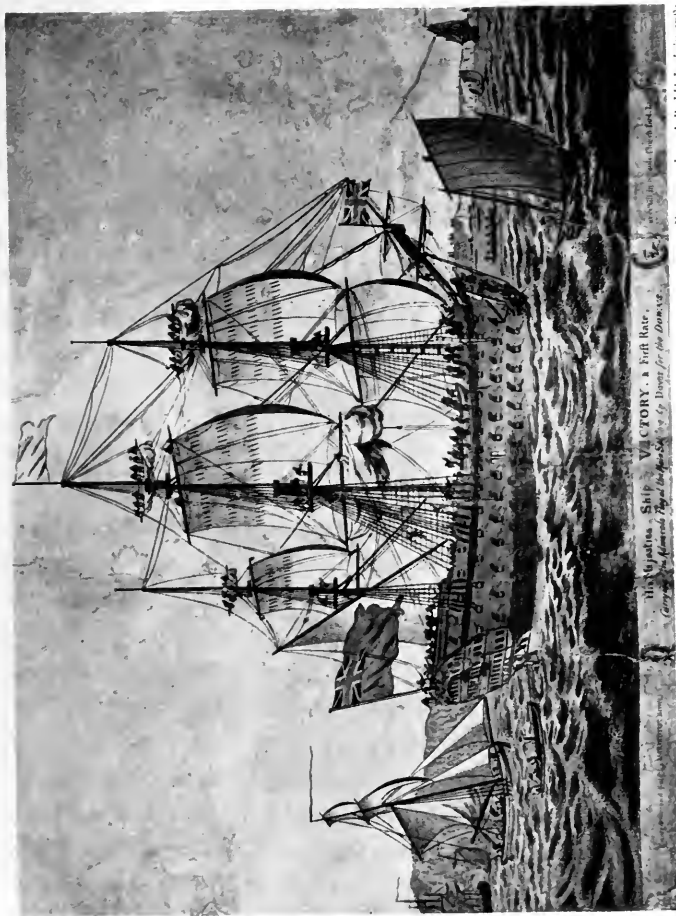
Victory to Victory ever  
Hands the torch of Glory on.

But that is not quite all. In a special sense no more appropriate name could have been given to the British man-of-war laid down as the special first-rate of the year 1759. In that sense the *Victory*

commemorates in her name the most brilliant year of warlike achievement in our annals, the most successful year for British arms that the world ever saw. In her name, in this regard, our Nelson's *Victory* of to-day stands as an abiding national memorial of England's greatest year of victory ; the "Wonderful Year," as our forefathers themselves called it, the year of Minden and Lagos Bay and Quiberon and Quebec. "We are forced," wrote Horace Walpole, in October, 1759, "to ask every morning what victory there is for fear of missing one."

March 31st, 1762, came—the date by which the *Victory* was to have been afloat. She was, though, still in frame, hardly advanced beyond that ; her bottom planked over, but all above practically as yet only in skeleton, little advanced, in fact, beyond the stage at which the shipwrights had left her eighteen months before. The Admiralty's change of plans after the French collapse at sea at the end of 1759 had put her completion off for two years. It was, however, not entirely lost time. An additional £12,000 had been laid out meanwhile for the ship in preparing and working up materials to be used in her, and seasoning them in readiness to push on with the building when work on the vessel was resumed.

The new date for completion, March, 1764, came in its turn, but again the *Victory* was not ready. Upwards of £50,000 had by now been spent on her, and the ship was four-fifths finished, her sides



*Drawn by Captain Robert Elliot, R.N.*

# THE VICTORY ON HER FIRST CRUISE

*Engraved and Published in 1780.*



planked to the upper works and the decks laid. They had slackened off considerably in regard to new construction at Chatham after the war ended. The dockyard establishment had been reduced by two-thirds and overtime stopped. General repairs were the order of the day, to make good the wear-and-tear of war service at all the dockyards, and practically a third part of the whole sea-going navy fell to Chatham's share of mending.

Another six months was then officially granted for the finishing of the *Victory*; but this time the Admiralty themselves, and the French incidentally, caused fresh delay. My Lords did their share by coming down to Chatham at the end of May, 1764, on a visit of inspection, walking over the *Victory* and leaving suggestions for alterations to be made which would take at least four additional months to carry out. The French hindered the intended progress by a display of aggressiveness towards England over the Newfoundland fisheries question, as left arranged by the recent Treaty of Paris. That trouble at the outset looked so serious that the workmen at the dockyards were drawn off all ships building and repairing in order to get part of the Ordinary, the ships in reserve, into sea-going state at once. So the *Victory* had her completion again put off.

In the midst of this French "disturbance"—as our ancestors of that time termed international unpleasantnesses of the kind—we may conveniently take our leave of the *Victory* on the stocks at Chatham, in the midst of a series of strange scenes

the like of which, happily, have not often been witnessed in an English dockyard.

The Newfoundland difficulty was still unsettled, when, at the end of October, 1764, secret information of a startling nature suddenly reached the Admiralty from abroad. It was to the effect that a plot was on foot, with the connivance of the French Government, to destroy the English dockyards by incendiarism and fire the ships of war under construction. There proved to be reason to consider the news in a most serious light, and extraordinary measures of precaution were forthwith ordered at all the yards.

At Chatham, the nightly guard-boats patrolling the line of ships laid up at moorings in the Medway Ordinary, were doubled. Strict orders were issued to those in charge of the ships in Ordinary to keep their gun-room ports close shut all night, to send adrift before dark all shore boats lying astern, to hoist in all the ship's boats, to haul up on board at night all the Jacob's ladders over the stern used by the ship-keepers for getting on board. All fishing boats and hoys passing up and down the Medway were kept under observation. All doubtful or strange boats of any kind on the river were to be challenged and reported. Special dockyard guard-boats were told off to patrol from sunset to sunrise along the river front of the yard. All persons landing at the yard from the guardships after dark were to come alongside and disembark only at certain specified points. Strangers visiting the yard on business during the day were to be accompanied throughout



their stay ; no foreigner of whatever quality or rank was to be allowed to pass the gates without a written permit from the Commissioner. The yard-warders posted ashore on look-out round the walls of the yard were doubled, and marines were drafted into the yard to keep watch at night, "conformable to the strictest rules of Garrison duty." A captain's guard was posted at the dockyard gates, and a subaltern's guard at the North-East Tower. A special parole with countersign was given out by the Commissioner every twenty-four hours. Constant patrols of marines were kept on the move round and about the yard all night. Armed sentries were posted on the river front, by the workshops and storehouses, the hemp and rope houses, and the timber berths. No fewer than twenty-two of these sentry-posts were appointed in and about Chatham dockyard, and each man going on duty was supplied with three rounds of ball.

To safeguard the *Victory*, the pride of Chatham, "the finest man-of-war ever built for the Royal Navy," as they already spoke of her, a cocked-hatted, high-gaitered marine sentry, loaded firelock on shoulder, was kept pacing up and down with steady tramp alongside the dock where the ship lay, all the night long. His orders were to challenge all suspicious persons and loiterers, and all persons approaching the ship, twice—"Halt, who comes there !" If not answered after that, he was to fire. To prove himself on the alert, at every quarter of an hour, when the warders on the wall look-out towers struck their bells, the

sentry had to call out the number of his post, passing it on to the next sentry, and echoing back the hail "All's well !" A fresh man came on duty every two hours. To further ensure the safety of the *Victory*, once at least during every night a "visiting rounds" patrol, comprising an officer from the main guard and a corporal and file of marines with lantern and jingling keys, boarded the ship to explore between-decks and below for lurking evil-doers or any combustibles that might be secreted.

But Jack the Painter's time had not yet come. Nothing in the way of incendiarism happened at Chatham, or at any of the other dockyards in 1764, and after two or three months of unrest, things resumed their normal state of tranquillity.

Nothing more happened after that to hinder or delay the completion of the *Victory*, and by the following March her bulkheads and magazines were fitted, the port-lids and the rudder hung, and the poop lanterns in place, and the caulkers and painters were getting through with their finishing touches.

On St. George's day, April 23rd, 1765, the Commissioner at Chatham reported the *Victory* to the Admiralty as ready to be launched. The requisite order in reply, dispatched through the Navy Board, arrived on the 30th of April. It directed the launch to take place at the next spring tides. These were due on the 7th of May.

## VII

### ON VALENTINE'S NIGHT IN FRIGATE BAY

If we go forward, we die ;  
If we go backward, we die ;  
Better go forward—and live !

**T**HE story of what happened once in Frigate Bay, St. Kitts, in the West Indies, recalls one of our “forgotten glories” ; a feat of arms that nine out of ten people, one may be quite certain, have never heard of. Nor do our general histories say much of it, even of those whose pages make reference to it. Yet it is one of the very smartest, and neatest, and cleverest displays that, it may be, any British Admiral ever made, and it was managed, too, in the face of heroic odds. In every sense it was a daring and dashing deed of arms, and its moral effect on the enemy at the time was immense and widespread. It was in February of the year 1782, in the closing year of England's long war with France and Spain in alliance with the rebel American Colonists. At that moment the French under the Comte de Grasse were in overpowering force in the West Indies, and were about, as they loudly vaunted, to make a sweeping attack on the five remaining

British Islands, which, they declared openly, would prove an easy prey.

Rodney, the British Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies, had gone home on sick leave for a short time at the end of the preceding season. He was now on his way out again, with what reinforcements the sorely-tried Admiralty, at their wits' end for ships and the men to man them with, could get together for him ; but he had not yet arrived. Sir Samuel Hood (the famous Lord Hood of a later day), Rodney's second in command, was in charge of the station in Rodney's absence. It was by him that the brilliant exploit which forms our story here was achieved in Frigate Bay, St. Kitts.

Hearing in December, 1781, that the French Admiral, de Grasse, who had been co-operating with Washington in the Chesapeake, had arrived with his whole force at Martinique, and was on the point of sailing thence, or had already sailed, with a large force of troops on board to attack and capture Barbados, Hood at once followed ; to try and hold the enemy in check till Rodney joined. He had only twenty-two ships of the line to de Grasse's twenty-six, but he meant to make a fight of it in any event.

Six of Hood's ships, it should be noted, were only 64-gun ships, the smallest class of vessels placed in the line of battle ; and two of the fleet, also, the *Invincible* and the *Prudent*, were old vessels, worn out and crazy. Both, indeed, had been officially reported on as unfit for sea. Hood's biggest ship was his own flagship, the *Barfleur*, a 90-gun ship.

De Grasse's ships, on the other hand, comprised the most powerful man-of-war in the world—the gigantic *Ville de Paris* of 112 guns; and the French had as well twenty seventy-fours and three sixty-fours.

On his way to Barbados, Hood put into English Harbour, Antigua, the naval head-quarters of the Leeward Islands Station. There he heard fresh news. The blow had fallen elsewhere. De Grasse had been delayed on his way to Barbados by bad weather. He had turned aside, and swooped down on St. Kitts. He had already begun a fierce attack, it was reported, and the small British garrison of regulars in the island were in a very precarious position. They were, however, still holding out. They occupied an impregnable position on Brimstone Hill, but their supplies were short and there was treachery among the islanders.

Hood received details at Antigua of the attack on St. Kitts. Taking on board the 28th and 69th Foot and two companies of the 13th, part of the garrison of the island, and arranging also to form two battalions of marines, made up from the marines serving on board his fleet, Hood sailed at once to try and save the island. "He sailed," to use the words of one of Hood's officers, "with the inadequate force of 1500 troops, which was all he could get from the general commanding at Antigua, on the 23rd of January, to relieve St. Christopher's, attacked by 9000 Frenchmen under the Marquis de Bouville" [*sic*] (i.e. de Bouillé).

Hood proposed to surprise de Grasse at anchor

and attack him at daybreak on the morning of the 24th of January. He knew that the enemy were lying in Basseterre Roads, a few miles from Brimstone Hill. To counterbalance the numerical superiority of the French fleet, Hood, in his plan of attack, proposed to throw the entire British squadron on one portion of the enemy, which he hoped to overwhelm before the rest could weigh and come to the rescue. Then he would be able, he expected, to match himself effectively against what would remain of the French. The plan was foiled at the outset by the blundering of the officer of the watch on board the *Nymphe*, a frigate, which, during the night of the 23rd, in the dark got across the bows of the *Alfred*, a seventy-four, the leader of the battle-line. She caused a collision that damaged the *Alfred* very seriously, and nearly cut the *Nymphe* in two.

Owing to the collision Hood's entire plan had to be altered. The repairs to the *Alfred* took all day on the 24th and until ten o'clock on the morning of the 25th, before the ship was again fit for service, and during that time the rest of the British fleet lay-to. They were already in sight of St. Kitts, with the result that the news of Hood's arrival in the neighbourhood, up to then unsuspected, reached the French Admiral. Now there was no longer a question of surprise. Before he actually sighted the British fleet, de Grasse had got ready for Hood, and had had time to get under way and stand out to meet him.

Hood, disappointed though he was, was not baffled. He had a second plan of action in his mind. He next began to manœuvre as if he did not wish to come to close quarters with de Grasse—as, indeed, might well be the case, looking at the odds. He made a series of feints, as though he desired to shirk a battle and slip away, on which the French Admiral, becoming more and more confident, stood boldly out to sea after him. That was Hood's game. He drew de Grasse clear of St. Kitts and to leeward of the island, manœuvring meanwhile so as to keep the weather-gage for himself. Then, suddenly hauling his wind, Hood dashed in, making for the anchorage the French had quitted in Basseterre Roads.

He swept in so close along the shores of Nevis—to prevent the enemy getting within him—that one of his frigates, the *Solebay*, “was wrecked from not having room to pass between the line-of-battle ship she was abreast of and the western point of Nevis.”

Holding his way ahead, Hood slipped right past the French and raced de Grasse for his own anchorage. Hood won the race on the post. After a flying interchange of broadsides he brought in his whole fleet, well in hand, right into Frigate Bay, Basseterre Roads, exactly where de Grasse had been lying previously, and occupied the very moorings that the French had originally had. In that way he placed the British fleet between the French troops on shore and their supporting fleet. It was a masterstroke. Hood had turned the tables exactly. He

completely cut off the French troops on shore from receiving aid from their fleet.

Completely surprised and outwitted by the British Admiral's daring move, all that de Grasse could do was to attempt to overpower Hood while he was in the act of anchoring. What happened is described by the officer in the British fleet who has already been quoted.

"When he perceived the whole fleet following their leader, he tacked his fleet together . . . and, in consequence, the French fleet approached within gunshot at a little before three o'clock. De Grasse, who was in the centre of his line, fetched in the *Ville de Paris* nearly abreast of the *Canada*, while the headmost ship of his fleet was drawing in abreast of Sir Samuel Hood's ship, the *Barfleur*. Their whole van boldly advanced towards the *Barfleur*, which reserved her fire until the brave Frenchman approached within musket shot, when she opened such a well-directed and quickly repeated fire, that in a few minutes the French ship had her jib-boom shot away, her sails nearly cut into ribbons, and her rigging so cut up that she quickly put her helm a-weather, and bore away from her redoubted antagonist. De Grasse perceiving an opening in our line, boldly attempted to sever it; but Cornwallis placed himself in the breach, which he so ably defended that his gigantic opponent was glad to relinquish the hazardous enterprise. Hood looked on undismayed



at this attack upon his rear, knowing that he could confide in every individual captain, and very coolly ordered the signal to be made for the ships ahead to make more sail, in order to hasten their anchoring as soon as possible. In the meantime, the *St. Albans* (the leading British ship) had taken up her station, and anchored at 3 p.m., and the other ships did the same in succession, while the centre and rear were closely engaged with the enemy, who pressed them close until every ship was anchored, when the French wore in succession and stood out to sea."

De Grasse made two fierce attacks on Hood next day.

"On the morning of the 26th, at half-past eight," continues our officer eye-witness, "the French fleet were seen coming round Nevis Point, intending to force a passage, but so singularly felicitous was the position taken up by the British Admiral, that when the enemy's leading ship approached, the wind headed her, so that she could not fetch above the third ship in our line. The springs of our van ships were so admirably attended to that the broad-sides of four of them were brought to bear at the same time upon the unfortunate Frenchmen, and were opened with tremendous effect.

"The crash occasioned by their destructive broad-sides was so tremendous on board the ship (the *Pluton*), that whole pieces of plank were seen flying from her off side ere she could escape. The French ships generally approached the British van with more caution, with the exception of some, among them

being the *Ville de Paris*. De Grasse, in order to prolong the individual encounter as much as possible, counterbraced his after-yards to retard his ship's way through the water along the British line ; and so the French flagship was detained a considerable time abreast of the *Resolution*, *Prudent*, *Canada*, and *Alfred* in succession, as the *Ville de Paris* slowly forged ahead and fired upon them.

“During this short but tremendous conflict between the respective combatants, nothing whatever could be seen of them for upwards of twenty minutes, save De Grasse's white flag gracefully floating above the immense volume of smoke, or the pendants of the other ships.

“In the afternoon the French made a second attack on our line. It commenced at fifty minutes past two, and was principally directed against the centre and rear, the morning attack having convinced them that the British van was not to be assailed with impunity. Never, perhaps, was a superior enemy so completely foiled as de Grasse was on this occasion.”

Hood used all the means in his power to make good the advantage that he had gained, as we are further told :

“Sir Samuel Hood not only secured his fleet from any assault by sea, but also took measures to prevent the enemy from molesting it from the land, where it was infinitely more vulnerable : for could they have thrown up any batteries on the hill situated above Green Point, his position would have been no longer tenable. To prevent such an attempt on the part of



THE FIRST FIGHT IN FRIGATE BAY, ST. KITTS.  
*Admiral Sir Samuel Hood's squadron of 22 ships (at anchor) beating off De Grasse's opening attack, with 28 ships (shown coming into the bay under full sail) at 2.30 p.m., on January 25th, 1782.*  
*Drawn by N. Povey, "from a sketch made by a gentleman who happened at the time to be on a visit at a friend's, on a height between Basses Terre and Old Road."*



the enemy, he landed the troops that accompanied the fleet in Frigate Bay, where they took post on the eminence that commanded the narrow neck, which continues the southern point of St. Christopher's with the main island."

The troops made an effort to join hands with the garrison on Brimstone Hill as soon as possible after they had landed. They advanced rapidly, and in their first fight with the French covering force met with some success. Driving in the enemy's outlying detachments, they advanced some way towards the French main position. Then the situation altered. De Bouillé himself, at the head of 4000 men, came on the scene. General Prescott, the British army officer in charge of the relief operations, had with him only 1,500 men, the soldiers from Antigua. He had refused to take the two battalions of marines (each of 500 men) which Hood had had prepared for service on shore and had urged him to take as well. Hopelessly outnumbered General Prescott had to fall back. In the end he was compelled to evacuate his camp near the sea and re-embark all his soldiers on board the fleet. That meant the doom of Brimstone Hill, and the colony of St. Kitts with it.

The garrison under Governor Shirley and Brigadier Fraser—comprising the 1st Battalion of the Royals, and the flank companies of the 15th Foot and a detachment of Royal Artillery, with a handful of local militiamen—from a thousand to twelve hundred men in all, still held out, doing their best. As long as they held out Hood made up his mind

to stay where he was. Rodney was overdue now with his promised reinforcement from England, a dozen ships of the line. If Rodney arrived while the British flag was still flying in the island and could join hands with Hood, there was yet a chance of checkmating the enemy and of saving St. Kitts. But could Brimstone Hill hold out? It was more than doubtful.

The place was naturally an impregnable fortress, but the fortifications had been badly placed. The garrison were not numerous enough to line the walls. They had no heavy guns mounted, and the enemy were day after day bombarding them with a pitiless fire that closed in on them more and more, and became fiercer and more deadly and destructive every hour.

It is an ugly story—the tale of the fortifications of Brimstone Hill. Strong entrenchments had been planned a year before, and heavy guns sent out from England to be mounted on the ramparts. But the local authorities had not troubled to follow the plans, and what fortifications had been built had been run up incompletely and carelessly. The guns specially sent out from Woolwich for the works—brass 24-pounders and 13-inch mortars—had never been mounted at all. They had, as a fact, been left lying at the foot of the hill near the seashore, just as they had been landed, together with their gun carriages and every kind of equipment complete,

besides tons of shot and shell. For over a year the local authorities had paid no heed to the repeated requests of the governor, and the general in command of the garrison in the island, to provide the labour and appliances indispensable for transporting the guns and material to the top of Brimstone Hill. Rodney himself during the previous summer had repeatedly urged the island local authorities, as a matter of public safety, to do their duty in the matter, but all had been in vain. The result was that de Bouillé and his army had on landing seized the guns and their ammunition, all lying there ready to hand. The French, in fact, had formed out of them the very siege train by means of which they were now able to batter down the weak fortifications on the hill above. The garrison, on the other hand, had only the few light 3-pounder and 6-pounder field pieces belonging to the Royal Artillery, with which to reply.

With the heavy guns provided from England in position, Brimstone Hill might well have held out till Rodney and his reinforcements had arrived and joined Hood, when the enemy must have paid dearly for their attempt. And, at the same time, without the English garrison guns at his disposal, de Bouillé would have been harmless. By an extraordinary coincidence the ship carrying the French siege train for St. Kitts had been wrecked on its way, and the second ship, carrying the French siege ammunition, had been captured by Hood. The French had actually no other siege

artillery or ammunition nearer than in the gun park on shore at Martinique.

Rodney, indeed, on learning the facts of the case at St. Kitts after his arrival, did not hesitate to write to England and to make other serious imputations on the loyalty of the colonials all through the whole business. "The inhabitants of Basseterre in St. Christopher's," he wrote, "suffered the enemy to land without firing a single gun, though they had three good batteries which might have done good service and destroyed many of the enemy, and certainly prevented their landing at Basseterre." "Nor during all the time that Hood was lying off the capital, in Frigate Bay," added Rodney, "did a single inhabitant come on board or afford the least intelligence."

The disaffection at St. Kitts, unfortunately, was no isolated case, as Rodney reported in the same dispatch. Actual treason, indeed, was rife among the white populations throughout the British West Indies, except in loyal Jamaica and at Antigua. The planter-militia forces in the various islands were worse than useless. "Barbados," wrote Rodney, "is in no state of defence, and their legislature will not raise a penny to repair the fortifications. . . . They wish to be taken, but the rogues shall be disappointed while I remain here!" Dominica fell into the enemy's hands through the vilest treachery. There the garrison of the principal fort defending the island, near Roseau, the capital, were made drunk by the colonials, who at the same time plugged



up the touch-holes of their cannon and rendered the soldiers' muskets useless by putting sand into the gun locks; after which they signalled to a French expeditionary column, which had secretly been assisted ashore that same night, to advance and take possession.

At sea, meanwhile, off Frigate Bay, de Grasse watched and waited, contenting himself with "observing" Hood from just outside gunshot range of the British fleet. During the three weeks between the 26th of January and the 13th of February, Hood's men were, as the Admiral described, "under arms night and day," but doing their duty all the time, as Hood put it, "with a cheerfulness and good humour which charmed me." This was in spite of much privation. They were deficient in provisions and stores, having had but little time to take in anything at Antigua—short of water and "practically without bread, living on yams and country flour to eke out their own." Powder and shot, too, were short in some of the ships. None of the fleet, indeed, had had an opportunity of replenishing magazines since they arrived in the West Indies after the fighting in the Chesapeake in the previous September.

"The enemy's fleet made frequent demonstrations of attacking us, but never came near enough to engage. On the 12th February their fleet amounted to thirty-two ships of the line, a strong reinforcement from France having joined, which not only

supplied the place of their disabled ships, but contributed to swell their numbers. On the 13th the Comte de Grasse despaired of being able to assail with any prospect of success our little fleet of twenty-two ships, and prudently anchored off Nevis."

The end came for the Brimstone Hill garrison on the 13th of February. Further resistance was hopeless, and there seemed no prospect of relief reaching them. The ramparts had been beaten down; their ammunition was exhausted, most of their guns were disabled. De Bouillé summoned the place, announcing his intention of storming the works. Unable to offer more resistance the garrison surrendered, on terms that were complimentary to the very gallant resistance that they had made.

Hood, at his anchorage in Frigate Bay, learned the unwelcome news by a flag of truce from the French camp near Basseterre next morning, Wednesday, the 14th of February. It meant that he must now look out for himself. The situation had changed to one of very serious danger for him. Not only was there de Grasse outside, with a fleet that was being reinforced almost daily with fresh ships from Martinique, but there was also the French army on shore. They had already begun throwing up batteries in which they were mounting the same heavy long-range English guns by means of which they had reduced Brimstone Hill. The shot and shell from these would speedily render further continuance at the anchorage impossible. The enemy, moreover, had found an excellent position for their purpose on

a lofty bluff whence they could sweep the anchorage from end to end.

De Grasse's fleet numbered ten ships more than Hood had; and most of the recent arrivals were 80-gun ships.

De Grasse's withdrawal to Nevis for a few hours in order to refit his fleet out of some storeships that had just arrived from France gave Hood his chance. The French Admiral made sure that in the circumstances there was no possibility of the British fleet escaping complete destruction. Off Nevis he could keep the English fleet in sight, and only a couple of hours sail from him. Hood seemed, as it were, between the upper and nether millstones: between the French fleet in overpowering force on one side, and the batteries on shore on the other, which also, as de Grasse knew, were to be ready to open fire next day.

Once more, though, it was to be the old story of the slip between the cup and the lip. Hood essayed one desperate chance, and won it. He proved himself a good deal more than a match for de Grasse and de Bouillé on shore combined.

The British Admiral lost no time over his preparations. He had made up his mind what to do within an hour of receiving the news of the fall of Brimstone Hill. And then he acted forthwith.

At noon on the 14th Hood signalled for a lieutenant from every ship to come on board the flagship

*Barfleur*. Certain special instructions were given out, and the officers were directed to come on board for further orders after dark—at nine o'clock that night. In accordance with the admiral's instructions, at four in the afternoon every ship ostentatiously lowered top-gallant yards, making things snug for the night to all appearances, to spectators at a distance. Immediately it was dark, as quickly as possible stream-anchors were got in, and every preparation was rapidly made for putting to sea. These left every ship riding with only one anchor down, the small bower. At nine o'clock, as had been ordered also, top-gallant yards were quietly rehoisted and crossed on board every ship. Then the officers told to return for further orders, pulled silently off to the *Barfleur* again and reported everything ready.

Each officer on arriving was requested to go down to the *Barfleur's* cabin. Hood was there, and he saw each one set his watch exactly by the flagship's clock. Then all were ordered to return on board their respective ships. As the hands of the officers' watches pointed to eleven, every ship was to cut her cable, come to sail at once, and get under way in line of battle ahead, every ship moving out to sea independently, steering to the westward, keeping on a given line of bearing. On no account must there be any noise—no hailing, no signalling whatever. Not a match must be struck on board, and all lights must be screened.

Not a single mishap, not one mistake, from all accounts, marred the execution of the bold manœuvre.

It was a black and moonless night. As six bells—eleven o'clock—clanged out on board the *Barfleur*, the other ships each struck six bells. The next moment a couple of heavy blows with an axe chopped the bower cable through on board every ship. Then, simultaneously, sails were let fall silently from the yards everywhere, and were swiftly and silently sheeted home. At once now, in unison, the whole fleet began to forge ahead, moving all together through the water. To aid in deceiving the enemy as to what was happening, lighted ship's lanterns were left behind, lashed to poles set up on the casks that had served as cable buoys, making it appear from a very short distance off as though the fleet were still there, riding at anchor in the roads.

The masterly *ruse* succeeded to the full. The watch on board the English fleet could see the lights of some of de Grasse's ships away to seaward. They themselves, one and all, entirely unobserved, passed out in the darkness. Not a trace of Hood's twenty-two ships was visible when de Grasse came on deck on board his flagship, the *Ville de Paris*, next morning.

They met Rodney at sea a few days later;—and then, in due course Rodney and Hood together smote the French once for all for that war, in the great battle of "The Glorious Twelfth of April," 1782.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A full narrative of the campaign and battle is given in "Famous Fighters of the Fleet," pp. 52-161.

## VIII

### THE PAGEANT OF THE *DONEGAL*:

A MEMORY OF '98

Joy ! joy ! the day is come at last, the day of hope and pride—  
And see ! our crackling bonfires light old Bann's rejoicing tide,  
And gladsome bell and bugle-horn from Newry's captured  
towers,

Hark ! how they tell the Saxon swine this land is ours—is  
OURS !

Come, trample down their robber rule, and smite its venal  
spawn,

Their foreign laws, their foreign Church, their ermine and their  
lawn,

With all the specious fry of fraud that robbed us of our own ;  
And plant our ancient laws again beneath our lineal throne !

THE name Donegal has a significance to the Royal Navy that is all its own. It was designated by the Admiralty as a county cruiser name, for one of the ships of the *Kent* and *Monmouth* group ; but there is more than that behind the name. *Donegal* lettered on the stern of a man-of-war has its own traditions—associations of a yet wider interest to the British fleet. The name, as a fact, owes its appearance on the Navy List to a very special occasion. H.M.S. *Donegal*, in its origin, is only incidentally connected with County Donegal. The cruiser through her

name stands, in fact, to remind the world that the Royal Navy does not "fear to speak of '98."

It is quite a little drama how this particular man-of-war name first came to make its appearance on the roll of the British fleet; and in that form, perhaps, one may most effectively tell the story—as a sort of pageant, bringing the details forward in, as it were, a series of tableaux.

First we have the opening scene, in bustling Paris, in the month of August, 1798, something after this fashion :

The Marseillaise is pealing ! the crowds are mad with joy,  
 With flags and faillë fêteing the gallant Paris Boy,  
 Who leads the bright procession of Frenchmen gay and bold ?,  
 The Students of the Quarter, the Latin Quarter Old ;—  
 They're girt with dainty rapiers, they're gloved with gloves of  
     white,  
 The knightly Gallic Swordsmen who love the People's Right !  
 They bear in bright procession a pledge from France's shore,  
 The busts of Hoche and Humbert beneath the Tricolour !

Then we have a September scene far away. We are now among the wild, unkempt kerns and peasants of County Donegal, in their villages and rude moorland huts of turf and boulders, dotted among the lonely valleys far away amid the bare, desolate, wind-swept uplands and bleak, gaunt, long-backed ridges, shrouded for half the year in rolling grey mists from off the ocean, that range along the coasts of North-Western Ireland. Everywhere the men are hard at work, seated in groups round their peat fires, all actively engaged in pointing pikes and

grinding axes, lashing scythe-blades to short poles, and putting a fresh edge to ugly crooked knives; crooning to themselves the while over their toil:—

Oh, the Frinch are on the say,  
Says the Shan Van Voght—  
Oh, the Frinch are on the say,  
Says the Shan Van Voght—  
The Frinch are in the Bay,  
They'll be here without delay,  
And the Orange will decay,  
Says the Shan Van Voght.

Again we are on the coast; by Donegal Bay. It is the morning of Friday, the 12th of October, '98, between seven and eight o'clock. Eager-faced, excited watchers line the crags of Bloody Foreland. From the wide, flat expanse of sea below comes up on the wind the dull, heavy, throbbing sound of a distant cannonade. It has been getting nearer since daybreak. It now comes nearer and nearer still; and by degrees, from the direction of Tory Island, on the horizon over yonder, where a grey rolling cloud of powder-smoke lies heavy over the sea, two squadrons of men-of-war, two straggling lines of ships, most of them firing fiercely, come dimly into view. One is assuredly the long-looked-for French—Commodore Bompert's squadron from Brest, bringing three thousand French soldiers and Wolfe and Matthew Tone. They were to have landed at Lough Swilly yesterday and raised the country-side. The other is the English fleet—a British squadron that has followed round from Cawsand Bay under press of sail to look after M. Bompert. They picked up



news of him off the Fastnet and Achill Island, and pushed on here. On the previous day at noon—as we learn later on—off Malin Head in a stiff north-westerly gale, the British look-outs sighted the French squadron; and they have been working to bring Monsieur Bompert to battle ever since.

It looks likely to go hard with the French. At the last moment a mishap checked their attempt to give the British the go-by. Their best ship, the *Hoche*, a fine 80-gun two-decker, and M. Bompert's own flagship, got disabled in a squall last night. Her maintopmast carried away, bringing down with it the main and mizen topgallant masts and tearing a gaping rent in the mainsail. So Sir John Borlase Warren, the British Commodore, has been able to get level with his enemy, on whom he is now tacking to bring the fight to close quarters, in conditions where his superior force—three line-of-battle ships and five frigates to one line-of-battle ship, eight frigates, and a schooner—ought to decide M. Bompert's fate before dinner-time.

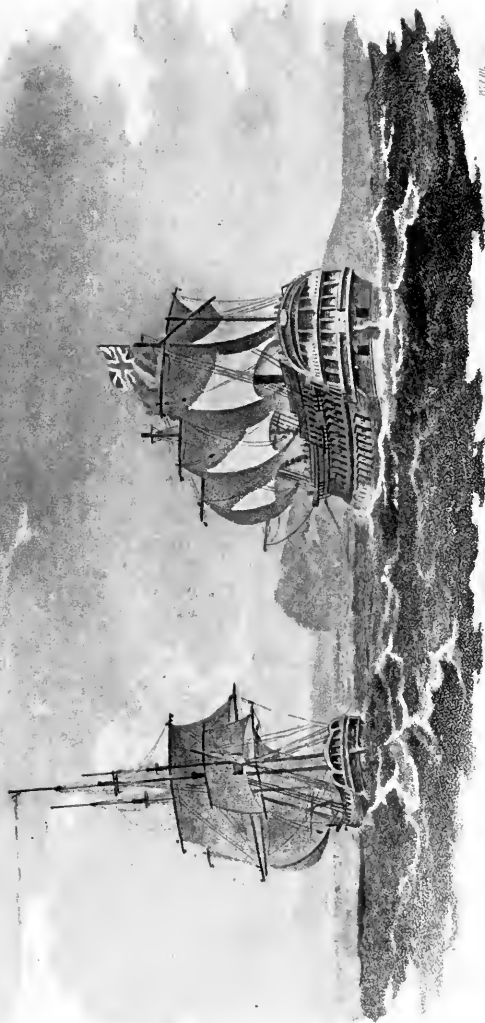
Eleven o'clock. The inevitable has happened. The Frenchmen have been overpowered at all points and broken up. The French Commodore is now only holding out as long as possible *pour l'honneur du pavillon*. In the centre of the battle, a dismantled wreck, with the scuppers running blood at every heave of the vessel on the swell, lies M. Bompert's flagship, the hapless *Hoche*. Three British ships

together—a sixty-four and two frigates—are pouring broadside after broadside into her without ceasing for a moment.

Wolfe Tone, the story goes, was on board the *Hoche*, and refused at the outset a chance that was offered him to get away by a boat to the *Biche*, a fast-sailing schooner then about to make off, or to one of the French frigates, by which means alone it was possible for him to escape. "The action is hopeless," said the French officers to him on the quarter-deck; "with the odds against us it can only have one end. We shall be prisoners of war; but what will become of you?" "No!" replied Tone. "Shall it be said that I fled when the French were fighting the battle of my country? No; I shall stand by the ship." He went below and took charge of a division of guns in one of the batteries.

The end, as the watchers on land soon see, comes swiftly. Further resistance would be murder. Beaten to a standstill, riddled like a sieve, with twenty-five guns disabled, more than half her men put *hors de combat*, her lower masts shot through and every moment threatening to go over the side, her rudder smashed to splinters, with five feet of water in the hold—down perforce has to come the *Hoche's* tricolor. So the battle ends.

It is just twenty minutes past eleven. Three other French ships, overtaken at their first attempt at flight, have already surrendered. The rest are making off, scattering over the horizon with British



*The "Hoche" in tow of the "Poris."*

OUR FIRST DUEL

The captured French line of battle ship "Hoche," being towed by the "Poris," 36. Lord Ranelagh, into Lough Swilly. Drawn by N. Pocock, from a sketch made from the "Robust" by Captain R. Williams of the Marines.



frigates in pursuit, to be run down and taken in the end—all of them except two.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth tableau rings down on the piece. The last scene closes some weeks later in the quiet waters of the Hamoaze off Devonport Dockyard, whither the *Hoche* was taken round, with the arrival of an Admiralty messenger at the Port Admiral's office. He brings in his dispatch wallet an official memorandum that "My Lords have been pleased to direct Sir J. B. Warren's prize to be registered in the List of the Navy by the name of the *Donegal*."

In this way it was that the name Donegal came originally into the Royal Navy for a man-of-war, and the battle of October, '98, off the coast of Donegal is our present cruiser's principal bond of connection with the county.

The luckless Wolfe Tone passed from the quarter-deck of the *Hoche* to the condemned cell and a suicide's grave. It came about in this way. The *Hoche* was towed into Lough Swilly and the prisoners were landed and marched to Letterkenny. The Earl of Cavan invited the French officers to breakfast. Tone was amongst the guests. He was in a French military uniform. An old college companion at T.C.D., Sir George Hill, recognized him. "How

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Stuart, who died at Gortley, Letterkenny, in April, 1903, at the reputed age of one hundred and twenty, used often to relate how he, as a boy, saw a British frigate arrive in Lough Swilly towing the French captured flagship, and with Wolfe Tone among the prisoners.

do you do, Mr. Tone?" said Hill pointedly. "I am very happy to see you." Tone greeted Hill cordially, and said, "How are you, Sir George? How are Lady Hill and your family?" The police, who had had information that Tone would be among the prisoners, lay in waiting in an adjoining room. Hill went to them, pointed to Tone, and said, "There is your man." Tone was called from the table. He knew what it meant—that his hour had come, but he went cheerfully to his doom. Entering the next apartment, he was surrounded by police and soldiers, arrested, loaded with irons, and hurried off to Dublin Castle. There he was tried by court-martial and sentenced to be hanged within forty-eight hours. His request for a firing party was curtly refused. Curran got a writ of habeas corpus from Lord Chief Justice Kilwarden. But he was too late. Tone anticipated the execution of the law, and died by his own hand—with a penknife.

The *Donegal* man-of-war served Great Britain for forty-seven years, keeping up to the last her reputation of being one of the swiftest two-deckers afloat.

Trafalgar should have been one of her battle honours. One of the very smartest captains that ever trod a British quarter-deck, "a dear Nelsonian" of exceptional ability and merit, the gallant and chivalrous Sir Pulteney Malcolm, commanded the *Donegal* at that time. The *Donegal* had been sent

by Nelson to Gibraltar to shift the low tier of water-casks just four days before the battle. While there, at two o'clock on the morning of Trafalgar day, Monday, the 21st of October, the *Weazle* sloop-of-war came bustling into Gibraltar Bay, and firing alarm guns. She brought the fateful news that the enemy had left Cadiz and were at sea. Captain Blackwood, of the *Euryalus*, in command of Nelson's inshore frigate squadron, had packed the *Weazle* off to Gibraltar to call up the six ships of the line, recently detached from Nelson's fleet, that had gone in there to fill up water-casks and refit.

The *Donegal* was lying with her sails unbent from the yards, her bowsprit out, and her fore-topmast and foreyard struck. All her powder had been landed, and the ship was fast alongside the Mole. The crew had not turned in, as Captain Malcolm was keen to rejoin Nelson off Cadiz at the earliest moment. When the *Weazle's* guns were first heard, they were hard at work shifting the lower tier of casks in the hold.

Instantly the order was given to prepare for sea. With extraordinary celerity the casks were got back into their tiers, and the powder was hurried into the magazines. The foremast was set up and the bowsprit replaced, the running rigging rove, and the sails were bent to the yards. Every man of the seven hundred on board the *Donegal* was working his hardest in one way or another. It proved, though, a twenty-two hours' job ; it would have been a four days' business in ordinary times. Before one o'clock

on the morning of the 22nd they were hauling out from the Mole into the bay. Then sea-stores and provisions were taken on board. Before noon the *Donegal* was ready for battle; a performance on which all concerned might justly pride themselves.

Not one of the other five ships was nearly so well advanced, although they also had been striving their hardest. Gibraltar is distant from the scene of the battle off Cape Trafalgar, as the crow flies, just fifty miles; but no sound of the firing reached there as it would appear, although at places further off, both in Spain and on the African coast, they heard the cannonading plainly. All on board the ships at Gibraltar still hoped to be in time for the expected battle, as it was to them.

A new spar had been ordered from the dockyard for the foreyard. It had not arrived by noon on the 23rd. It was forthcoming only at the last moment, just indeed as the *Donegal* was in the act of weighing anchor. Sail was made at once, and they went out of Gibraltar Bay with the foreyard towing in the water alongside the ship, not yet hoisted on board.

They had to beat out in the teeth of the wild storm, blowing a hard gale from the south-west, that, up the coast beyond Tarifa, was wrecking our Trafalgar prizes. Clawing out against the head wind, the *Donegal* won her way foot by foot, and by nightfall had gained the mouth of the Straits. Then they had to let go anchor, so as not to be swept back in spite of themselves. Next morning they



weighed anchor, and once more went forward, forcing their way ahead against wind and storm and swamping seas.

Damaged British ships began, one by one, to come in sight during the forenoon. The *Belleisle* was made out, totally dismasted, in tow of a frigate. Then the *Victory* was seen, partially dismasted and also in tow. The *Donegal* made her number to the flagship as she passed. A little time afterwards a third British man-of-war, with her three topmasts gone, came into view. It was the *Téméraire*. The *Donegal* passed quite near, and hailed across: "What news?" The answer was shouted back from the *Téméraire* through a speaking trumpet: "Nineteen sail of the line taken and Lord Nelson killed!"

On board the *Donegal* all were listening with straining ears. As the trumpet bawled the direful intelligence across, a shudder, we are told, seemed to run through the whole ship, followed by a deep, long drawn-out groan, plainly heard on board the *Téméraire* as that ship swept past on her way.

They reached Collingwood and the rest of the fleet off San Lucar a few hours later. At once the *Donegal* found work to do in finishing off and taking possession of the stricken and dismasted Spanish three-decker *El Rayo*, one of the forlorn-hope squadron that had made the sortie from Cadiz on the 23rd, hoping to find the British fleet in serious distress after the battle and the storm, and to be able to recapture some of the prizes.

Most of *El Rayo's* men were taken on board the *Donegal*. In connection with one of them, Captain Brenton tells this story. "A man fell overboard from the *Donegal* in a gale of wind on this occasion ; the usual cry was raised, when some one thoughtlessly called out, "He is only a Spaniard." "Supposing he is only a Spaniard?" said a gallant English seaman, seizing the end of a rope, and darting into the sea at the same time ; "no reason the poor — should be drowned!" Happy am I to say, from the information of Sir P. Malcolm, both men were picked up.

Besides that, the *Donegal* rendered invaluable assistance to several of the badly-damaged British ships during the second gale between the 25th and the 28th ; and in rescuing men from some of the prizes that had been driven ashore, or were in peril among the reefs here and there along the rock-bound coast.

Wrote Collingwood a day or two afterwards : "Everybody was sorry that Malcolm was not there, because everybody knows his spirit and skill would have acquired him honour. He got out of Gibraltar when nobody else could, and was of infinite service to us after the action."

By way also of appreciation and acknowledgment of the magnificent services rendered by the *Donegal* after the battle, the officers and men of the Trafalgar fleet, without one dissentient voice, agreed that the *Donegal* should be specially permitted to have a share, equally with themselves, in the Nelson Monu-

ment, which the ship's companies that fought at Trafalgar immediately after the battle jointly subscribed for, as their own personal tribute to their dead chief—the tall obelisk on Portsdown Hill at the back of Portsmouth Harbour.

The *Donegal*, three months later, was in the thick of the fighting in the brilliantly successful battle in the West Indies, when Vice-Admiral Sir John Duckworth, with a squadron detached by Collingwood off Cadiz, on special service, captured or destroyed an entire French squadron of five ships of the line from Brest, including the finest three-decker in the world, the great 110-gun ship *L'Impérial*, so named in honour of Napoleon himself. It was in this battle that the British flagship *Superb* led down into the fight with a portrait of Nelson lashed to the mizen stay, and her band playing "Nelson of the Nile."

Three of the five French ships lowered their colours to Captain Malcolm and the *Donegal*. First she led off with a rattling exchange of broadsides with the mighty French flagship *L'Impérial*. Then she fastened on a second French ship, and after a sharp set to at close quarters made her give in. Passing on, the *Donegal* engaged another French ship till her colours in turn came down. Then she ran on board one more Frenchman, the *Jupiter*, a ship that had already been hotly engaged. The *Jupiter* surrendered to the *Donegal* after next to no defence. Such was the *Donegal's* work that day, in

a battle that is really unique in the completeness of its results, but which, owing to its having taken place within three months of Trafalgar, the world paid little heed to at the time, and we have since quite forgotten—lost sight of in the dazzling lustre of the greater event near home.

Until after Waterloo had been won, the *Donegal* helped to keep the seas for England, and on more than one occasion with shotted guns in the face of the enemy.

Our second *Donegal*, a wooden 91-gun two-decker, built in the Fifties of the last century, was one of the very last sent afloat of our old "wooden walls." She still exists, under the name of the *Vernon*, torpedo school ship at Portsmouth.

The direct association between the *Donegal* of the Royal Navy and County Donegal came into existence first of all in the case of the present armour-clad cruiser, the *Donegal* of King Edward's fleet. She is a sister ship of the *Kent*, and was launched and named by the Duchess of Abercorn, as wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Donegal, and at express desire of the King. The *Donegal* of to-day was the second ship of our county cruisers to receive the honour of a special county presentation in commemoration of the name she bore. The presentation was made before the assembled officers and men of the ship by the Marquess of Hamilton, as M.P. for Derry City, and comprised a service of silver

plate, inscribed as the gift of "the King's subjects in the County of Donegal and the City of Derry."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, and to end the present story, it may be interesting to recall to mind that the Marquess of Donegall is Hereditary Admiral of Lough Neagh, the largest lake in the United Kingdom. The office had a real significance formerly, for Lough Neagh in the past, well within historic times, had a fleet of its own. Sir John Clotworthy, the ancestor of Viscount Massereene, who lived at Antrim Castle, had a patent for building as many vessels as might be needed for the King's service on Lough Neagh. His fleet set out from Antrim Castle in 1642 to attack the Irish in their fort at Charlemont. The battle between the fleet on the lake and the land forces resulted in the defeat of the men on shore, with their fort, and important consequences. The second Viscount Massereene was as strong a supporter of William of Orange as his ancestor had been of the Stuarts. He was made captain of Lough Neagh, and received 6s. 8d. a day, being bound to build and maintain a gunboat on the lake. The Lough Neagh Navy has disappeared, but the lake has still its admiral in the Marquess of Donegall.

IX  
ON BOARD OUR FLAGSHIPS AT  
TRAFALGAR

CAPTAIN HARDY AND THOSE WHO MANNED  
THE *VICTORY*

Heard ye the thunder of battle,  
Low in the South and afar?  
Saw ye the flush of the death-cloud,  
Crimson o'er Trafalgar?  
Such another day, never,  
England shall look on again,  
When the battle fought was the hottest,  
And the hero of heroes was slain!

**T**HIS is a glance at Captain Hardy, the captain of the *Victory* at Trafalgar, his lieutenants and other quarter-deck officers of Nelson's flagship, and also something of the men who manned the *Victory* and where they came from.

Incidentally this should be said of Nelson's own personal connection with the *Victory*. Nelson's first association with the *Victory* dated back to many years before Trafalgar—ever since, indeed, the year in which he entered the Navy as a boy of twelve. At that time the *Victory*, in her seventh year afloat, was lying up in reserve at Chatham, the pride of the

Medway, as the finest and biggest first-rate man-of-war in the British Navy. The boy Nelson while at Chatham saw her day after day for months, and must have gone on board her. Later on, during the four years that Nelson served in the Mediterranean under Hood and Jervis, between 1793 and 1797, the *Victory* was flagship of the fleet, and Nelson, as we know, was constantly on board her on business with the Admiral. It was on the *Victory's* quarter-deck also that Sir John Jervis, after the battle of Cape St. Vincent, publicly embraced Nelson and congratulated him on the magnificent display of heroic daring that he had made that day. In October, 1805, Nelson had flown his flag on board the *Victory* for two and a quarter years, ever since the war began, having at the outset gladly accepted the offer of her for his flagship from what he knew of her as the fastest three-decker afloat.

At Trafalgar "Nelson's Hardy," Captain Thomas Masterman Hardy, was captain of the *Victory*. He was not the "Captain of the Fleet," that post being officially vacant during Captain George Murray's absence on leave in England owing to urgent private affairs. Hardy's charming manner and tact, however, and his pleasant way of "getting on" with everybody he had to do with in all circumstances, enabled Nelson to manage for the time being without so invaluable an aid as "Friend Murray" had ever proved himself. Hardy and Nelson had served together for nearly nine years on and off, ever since they first met, when Hardy was a lieutenant in the

*Meleager*, a frigate in Nelson's flying squadron off the Eastern Riviera. When Nelson hoisted his broad pennant on board the *Minerve*, towards the end of 1796, Hardy went with him, and he owed something to Nelson during the cruise. Just before the battle off Cape St. Vincent, when the *Minerve* was passing the Straits off Gibraltar, with the Spanish fleet in pursuit of her, Hardy, then first lieutenant, put off in a boat to rescue a man who had fallen overboard. The man was picked up, but the boat was swept by the current right across the bows of the fast approaching enemy. On board the *Minerve* they gave the boat up for lost, when Nelson, risking the capture of the ship and all on board, brought-to. "By God," he called out, "I'll not lose Hardy!" "Back the mizen topsail!" They picked the boat up almost under the bowsprits of the enemy, and got off scot-free. After that, the brilliant way in which Hardy led the *Minerve's* boats at the cutting out of the French brig-of-war *Mutine* won him his post-captaincy and the command of his prize, in which he served until after the battle of the Nile when Nelson moved him into the *Vanguard* in place of Flag-Captain Berry, sent home with the dispatches.

Ever since the battle of the Nile Hardy had followed Nelson's fortunes as his flag-captain in the various ships on board which Nelson had his flag—in the *Vanguard* first of all, then in the *Foudroyant*, the *San Josef*, and the *St. George*. It was Hardy also who, on the night before the attack on Copenhagen, with cool daring, pulled with muffled oars close



alongside the ships of the Danish line and took the soundings which practically enabled Nelson to win the battle.

"A bachelor of 35, rather stout in build, with light eyes, bushy eyebrows, square broad face, plenty of chin, and a mouth whose corners played between humour and grimness," is the portrait that a contemporary gives of Captain Hardy in 1805.

Hardy—he lived to be Sir Thomas and K.C.B.—now lies in the mausoleum of the old pensioners' burial ground at Greenwich Hospital—a veteran laid to his rest among veterans. No more fitting last abode surely could have been found for "Hardy of the *Victory*" than amongst those with whom he had lived and fought and had his being.

And this be the verse that you grave for me,  
Here he lies where he wished to be ;  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.

He has his monument elsewhere : in his native Dorset, where there stands a massive column of stone, which the men and women of his county in their pride and affection subscribed for, and set up on a spur of Blackdown (or Blagdon) Hill, overlooking the little village of Portisham where Hardy lived as a boy, whence also he set out to accompany Nelson to Trafalgar. It stands in sight of the house where the Captain of the *Victory* was born, on the one hand ; while on the other it looks out across the vales towards the sea, not many miles away : a lonesome, wind-swept spot ; a place to visit

by oneself, say on some calm December afternoon, a little before the shortening winter twilight closes round, and look out from, seaward for choice—

. . . where afar

The grey sky pales to the dim horizon,  
And the murm'ring Channel with its wand'ring sails,  
Drifts down through the winter's day.

Looking seaward from the top of the monument, standing there over nine hundred feet above the sea—twice and a quarter the height of St. Paul's Cathedral—"the eye rests on an unbroken panorama of coast-line, extending from the Isle of Wight and St. Katherine's Point on the east, to Start Point and the Tors of Dartmoor on the west. . . . Far down below lie, clearly spread out as if on a map, Weymouth and the Backwater, as well as Portland and the Chesil Beach, whilst St. Aldhelm's Head and the Purbeck Hills to the left, and Thorncombe Beacon with Golden Cap beyond it to the right, stand out in prominent grandeur."

These were Captain Hardy's officers on board Nelson's flagship, a complete list of the lieutenants and other quarter-deck officers serving in the *Victory* on the 21st of October, 1805 :—

Lieutenants — John Pasco [Flag-Lieutenant] (wounded); John Quilliam; John Yule; Edward Williams; Andrew King; George Miller Bligh (wounded); George L. Brown; Alexander Hills; William Ram (killed).

Master—Thomas Atkinson.

Surgeon—William Beatty.

Purser—Walter Burke.

Chaplain—Rev. John A. Scott.

Secretary—John Scott (killed).

Gunner—William Rivers.

Boatswain—William Wilmet.

Carpenter—Wm. Bunce.

Marine Officers — Captain—Charles W. Adair (killed); Lieutenants — Lewis Buckle Reeves (wounded); James G. Peake (wounded); Lewis Roteley.

Master's Mates and Midshipmen—William Chase-man; J. R. Walker; Thomas L. Robins; Samuel Spencer; Wm. H. Symons; Robt. C. Barton; James Green; Richard Bulkeley (wounded); John Carslake; Henry Carey; John Felton; Festing Grindall; Daniel Harrington; John Lyons; David Ogilvie; Alexander Palmer (killed); John Pollard; James Poad; Oliver Picken; William Rivers (wounded); James Robertson; Richard F. Roberts; Robert Smith (killed); Philip Thovez; Thomas Thresher; James Sibbald; Daniel Salter; Francis E. Collingwood; George A. Westphal (wounded).

Surgeon's Mates—Neil Smith; William West-  
burgh.

Clerk—Thomas Whipple (killed).

First Class Volunteers—Henry Lancaster; Charles Chapell; J. R. Walker.

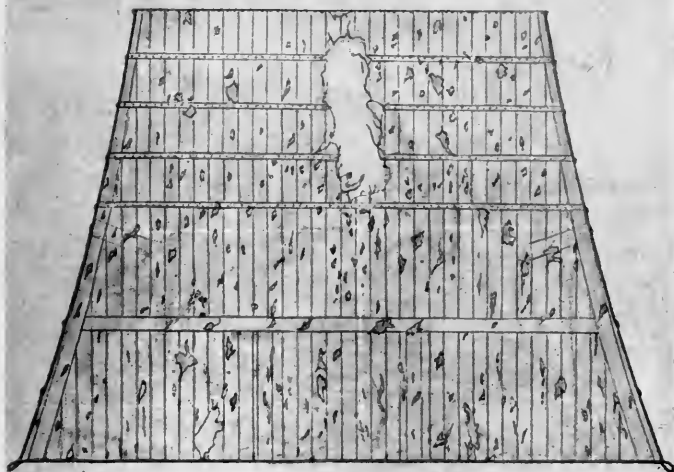
Midshipman William Ward Perceval Johnson of the *Childers* sloop-of-war, a former first-class Volun-

teer in the *Victory*, was on board the flagship at Trafalgar as the guest of his former messmates. He died in December, 1880, at the age of ninety, one of the five last survivors of Trafalgar, and the last surviving officer of those on board the *Victory*.

At Trafalgar the *Victory's* nominal complement as a first-rate, comprising the "ship's company," numbered 837 officers and men, including in the total as well, 40 boys, 145 marines, and 8 "widows' men." She had actually on board on the 21st of October 804 of all ranks and ratings, with, in addition, 26 "supernumeraries for victuals"—under which category Nelson himself and his secretary and personal suite and certain others were returned. There were 24 officers, including Captain Hardy and 9 lieutenants, and the various warrant officers; and 31 mates, midshipmen, and clerks. In action 50 men were at the quarter-deck guns; 20 were stationed on the forecastle; 150 on the main-deck; 180 on the middle-deck; and 225 on the lower-deck, where the heaviest guns were. These, it may be observed, had 15 men told off to each, as compared with 12 men each to the middle-deck guns, and 10 men each to the guns on the main-deck, quarter-deck, and forecastle. The signal-staff, comprising a lieutenant, with a mate, 3 midshipmen and 9 men, were on the poop, where the marines had also their post. Forty-eight men and boys were employed in and about the ship's three magazines in handing

N.M.S. Victory

Sketch of Fore Topsail as returned to store  
after Trafalgar



Scale 1/2 inch

REPRODUCTION OF THE OFFICIAL DRAWING OF THE VICTORY'S FORETOPSAIL AFTER TRAFALGAR AS RETURNED INTO STORE AT CHATHAM DOCKYARD IN MARCH, 1806



and passing cartridges, besides 19 more at the hatchways. All these were in addition to the powder-men—one man to each gun—employed on the battery decks in supplying the guns' crews in action. Six men were told off to attend to the wounded in the cockpit under the orders of the surgeon and his mates—not a very large number in the circumstances; and there were also the small-arm men, the carpenter's gangs to stop shot-holes and attend to leaks, men told off to see to the state of the rigging, and others in the various store-rooms, at the helm, and so on. This brief *résumé* will give an idea of the distribution of the *Victory's* ship's company at quarters.

The ship's books account for the nationality, or place of birth, of 633 of the officers and men on board the *Victory*, as mustered on the 17th of October, the last muster day before the battle (the Thursday before Trafalgar), not taking into reckoning the marines or the boys and supernumeraries. Of the total, 411 were of English birth, 64 were Scotsmen, 63 Irishmen, and 18 Welshmen. Three men were from Orkney and Shetland, 2 from the Channel Islands and 1 (Lieutenant Quilliam) from the Isle of Man. The remainder—71 men, were foreigners, from all quarters of the known world almost, got together, for the most part, out of merchant ships under impress warrants: 7 Dutchmen, 22 Americans, 2 Danes, 3 Frenchmen, 1

Russian, 3 Norwegians, 6 Swedes, 2 North Germans from Hamburg and 1 Prussian, 9 from various islands in the West Indies, 2 Swiss, 2 Portuguese, 1 African, 1 from Bengal and 1 from Madras, 4 Italians, and 4 Maltese.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Englishmen on board : Kent, the old maritime county of England in the day of the Cinque Ports, and the county of Admiral Rooke, who won Gibraltar for the British Empire, contributed twenty-seven ; Devonshire, the county of Drake and Raleigh, twenty-four ; Hampshire, twenty ; Somerset, the county of Blake and Rodney and the Hoods, four ;

<sup>1</sup> Having regard to the number of foreigners on board the *Victory*, these facts are in point. For more than fifty years previous to 1794, foreigners were permitted by Act of Parliament to enter on board British merchantmen trading overseas to the extent of three-quarters of the crew. After 1794, "for the encouragement of British seamen," an Act was passed reducing the proportion of foreigners to one-quarter of the ships' companies, which, however, still left a large number available at various places for the purposes of impressment for the Navy. As to the "Impress Service": in 1805, to keep up the supplies of men, forty-three permanent stations or "rendezvous" were maintained in Great Britain and Ireland, with an establishment of twenty-seven captains and sixty-three lieutenants, permanently on duty, established "in those parts of the United Kingdom where seamen chiefly resort, at which stations volunteers and impressed men are asked, and deserters from the Naval Service are apprehended." They were distributed as follows : London and Thames, two captains and ten lieutenants ; Deal and the Downs, Liverpool, and Dundee, a captain and three lieutenants at each place ; Falmouth, Hull, Cork, Cowes, Poole, Waterford, Bristol, Londonderry, Leith, Shields, Dublin, Portsmouth, and Gosport, a captain and two lieutenants at each place ; Newcastle, Sunderland, Yarmouth, Glasgow and Greenock, Dunbar, Limerick, Southampton, Romsey, Exeter, Lynn, Swansea, Folkestone, Ramsgate, Margate, Lerwick, and the Isle of Man, a captain and one lieutenant, or a lieutenant independently, at each place.



Hardy's county, Dorset, sent fourteen, one of them from Captain Hardy's own native village of Portis-ham ; Nelson's county, Norfolk, contributed fifteen ; Suffolk, whence came Admiral Vernon and Broke of the *Shannon*, twelve ; Essex, nine ; Sussex, five ; Cornwall, the county of Grenville of the *Revenge*, and "the great twin brethren" of the Seven Years' War, Hawke and Boscawen, seven ; Northumberland, Yorkshire (the county of Martin Frobisher and Captain Cook), and Lancashire, eighteen each ; Durham, seventeen ; Lincolnshire, seven ; Herefordshire and Oxford, six each. Wiltshire and Gloucester, five each. Old Benbow's county of Shropshire had one representative on board the *Victory* at Trafalgar. The other counties, men from which were in Nelson's flagship that day, represented by four men each, or fewer, were Berkshire and Bedford, Worcestershire, Hereford and Cheshire, Surrey, Cambridgeshire, Notts, Middlesex, Leicester, Staffordshire (the county of Anson and St. Vincent), Derby, Northampton, Cumberland, and Westmoreland. London was represented on the *Victory's* books by a hundred and fifteen men, Liverpool and Shields by ten each, Newcastle by fourteen, Bristol by five, Sunderland by four, Manchester by three. Birmingham, Leeds, Bury, Winchester, Canterbury were among other places represented on board ; and nearly every coast town from Tweedmouth, Hull and Grimsby, and round to Falmouth and St. Ives, had two or three men with Nelson. There were Scotsmen there from nearly every Scottish county, from Caithness and

Banff, Ross, and Cromarty, Aberdeen and Inverness, Fife and Forfar, Berwick, Renfrew, Galloway, Lanark, the county of that *preux chevalier* among British naval officers, Cochrane, Lord Dundonald, "the daring in war," Ayr and Argyll. Eleven men from Edinburgh were on board ; five from Glasgow ; seven from Dundee, the birthplace of Duncan of Camperdown ; with men from Leith, and Peterhead, Dumbarton, and Greenock. From Ireland, in like manner, men from Donegal fought the *Victory's* guns side by side with men from County Down and Roscommon, Meath and Carlow, Galway and Sligo, Cavan, Wexford and Waterford, Tipperary and County Cork. Fourteen men from Dublin were in the British flagship at Trafalgar ; eleven from Cork ; ten from Waterford City and Belfast ; Carrickfergus and Kinsale were also represented on board.

There were men of all ages between twenty and fifty in the crew of the *Victory* at Trafalgar, and boys from ten years old—the age of little Johnnie Doag, an Edinburgh boy, rated as a "First Class Boy," and probably the youngest person present on either side at Trafalgar—to lads of eighteen or nineteen. Four others of the thirty-one in the flagship (nine short of the complement) were just twelve years old, and six others, thirteen. The great majority of the men on board were from twenty to thirty years of age. About 10 per cent were over forty, the majority of these being between forty-seven and fifty. One of the "powder-monkeys" on board the *Victory*, it was discovered later, was a woman. Her

husband was also on board the ship. She was a native of Port Mahon, and an officer who saw her there in 1841 described her as being then "a sturdy woman of 70." The last survivor of the seamen and marines on board the *Victory* at Trafalgar died at Dundee in November, 1876.

This interesting detail in regard to the *Victory's* crew should be mentioned in addition. Practically 30 per cent of the seamen were volunteers, so the ship's muster-book states. It records in the column headed "*Whence and whether Prest or not,*" the word "Vol" against 181 of the names, out of a total of 628 able and ordinary seamen and landsmen.

There were, of course, men of all callings in civil life among the crew—as swept on board by the press-gang for the most part. According to inquiries made by officers on their own account, almost every trade and calling of everyday life contributed its quota in those times to the assortment on board our men-of-war. Collingwood, it is on record, had among the impressed men sent to one of his ships, a black San Domingo general, who had somehow found his way across the Atlantic; and also a Sussex market gardener, and a milkman, these last sent to him for top-gallant-yard men—poor fellows!

On board the *Elizabeth*, a seventy-four, for instance, out of a ship's company 395 in number, only 177, it is on record, were seamen or of callings connected with the sea: merchantman-sailors, fisher-

men, watermen, and dockyard hands. The other 218 were stated thus: 108 labourers, 5 joiners, 6 tailors, 14 weavers, 5 coopers, 6 blacksmiths, 3 whitesmiths, 1 slater, 1 umbrella-maker, 1 butcher, 10 shoemakers, 1 poulterer, 2 stocking-makers, 1 dry-salter, 7 farmers, 1 coppersmith, 4 servants, 3 gardeners, 2 curriers, 1 mattress-maker, 1 tobacco manufacturer, 1 fustian-cutter, 1 cotton manufacturer, 1 clockmaker, 1 watchmaker, 2 waiters, 1 brickmaker, 2 bricklayers, 1 soldier, 1 stonecutter, 2 sawyers, 7 painters, 1 corn-factor, 1 staymaker, 1 glassmaker, 2 hatters, 1 wiremaker, 1 potter, 1 miller, 1 mason, 1 miner, 1 chimney sweep. The same kind of mixture was found on board another seventy-four, with these additional items: 1 linen draper, 1 artificial flower-maker, 1 milliner, 1 hinge-maker, 6 more hatters, 5 more barbers, and another umbrella-maker, 1 button-maker and 1 thimble-maker, 2 flax and hemp dressers, 3 coach and harness makers, 4 dyers, 1 tanner, 1 maltster, 1 calendar-man, 2 wool-combers, 1 pipe-borer, 1 warehouseman, 1 tallow-chandler, 1 sadler, 3 pedlars, 1 violin-maker, 1 schoolmaster, and 1 optician. All was fish that came to the press-gang's net.

Again, too, to take another case. Captain T. Byam Martin (afterwards Sir Thomas and Admiral of the Fleet), of the *Implacable*, in May, 1808, checked the composition of his ship's company man by man, and sent the results of his investigation to his brother. "I have just now," he wrote, "been amusing myself in ascertaining the diversity of

human beings which compose the crew of a British ship of war, and as I think you will be entertained with a statement of the ridiculous medley, it shall follow precisely as their place of nativity is inserted in the ship's books: English 285, Irish 130, Welsh 25, Isle of Man 6, Scots 29, Shetland 3, Orkneys 2, Guernsey 2, Canada 1, Jamaica 1, Trinidad 1, St. Domingo 2, St. Kitts 1, Martinique 1, Santa Cruz 1, Bermuda 1, Swedes 8, Danes 7, Prussians 8, Dutch 1, Germans 3, Corsica 1, Portuguese 5, Sicily 1, Minorca 1, Ragusa 1, Brazils 1, Spanish 2, Madeira 1, Americans 28, West Indies 2, Bengal 2. This statement does not include officers of any description, and may be considered applicable to every British ship, with the exception that *very few of them have so many native subjects.*"

Of those who fought on board the *Victory's* special companion-in-arms at Trafalgar, the "Fighting" *Téméraire*, Ireland contributed just two-fifths of the total ship's company—220 men out of 550.<sup>1</sup> They came from all parts, according to the ship's books, mostly from Waterford, Belfast, Limerick, and Wexford; and about a third from Dublin, Newry, Kildare, Galway, Kilkenny, and Cork. Scotland supplied the *Téméraire* with 58 men; hailing, the greater number of them, from Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee, Greenock and Glasgow, Leith and Edinburgh. Wales contributed 38 men all told; from Swansea, Cardiff, Pembroke, and Milford, for the

<sup>1</sup> How the *Téméraire* played her part at Trafalgar is fully related in "Famous Fighters of the Fleet," pp. 231-275.

most part. Of all the Englishmen on board the "Fighting" *Téméraire* at Trafalgar, one county by itself contributed practically a third of the number—Devonshire. They counted 52 men, drawn from all over the county: Bideford and Barnstaple, Exeter, Tavistock, Dorlish [*sic*], Ilfracoombe [*sic*], Tiverton, and Dartmouth and Paignton. From London came 30 men in all. Lancashire had as many representatives in the ship as all Wales, 38—all except three hailing from Liverpool or Manchester. Somerset had 24, Cornwall 20, Yorkshire 13, Northumberland and Durham 10 each. These are the numbers from the other English counties: Norfolk 8 men, Hampshire 7, Kent 6, Cumberland and Gloucestershire each 5; Essex, Dorset, Chester each 4; Middlesex 3; Derbyshire, Warwick, Sussex, Cambridge, Worcester, and Suffolk each 2; Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire, Leicester, Surrey, Hereford, and The Isle of White [*sic*] 1 man each. There were 8 Manxmen at Trafalgar on board the "Fighting" *Téméraire*; 2 Jerseymen, and 1 man from Guernsey. Jamaica had 1 man on board, and Newfoundland 2 men. As usual, a number of foreigners figure on the books—66 altogether. They included: 28 Americans, 9 Germans (mostly from Hamburg and Emden), 6 Swedes, 5 Portuguese, 3 Frenchmen, 3 Spaniards, 1 Dutchman, 1 Cape-Dutchman, 1 from "Sclavonia" (Peter Valentine by name), 1 Viennese (Emil Joaquim), 1 from Old Calabar (a negro named Ephraim) and the remainder from Santa Cruz and other non-British islands in the West Indies.

The log of the *Victory* for the day after the battle accounts for all who fell on board Nelson's flagship, whether killed or wounded. It sets out the full list in this form :—

“A return of men killed and wounded on board his Majesty's ship *Victory*, bearing the flag of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., Duke of Bronté, Vice-Admiral of the White and Commander-in-Chief, on the 21st day of October, 1805, in an engagement with the combined fleets of France and Spain off Cape Trafalgar. Thomas Masterman Hardy, Esq., Captain.

KILLED		
<i>Names</i>		<i>Quality</i>
The Right Hon. Lord		
Viscount Nelson, K.B.,		
Duke of Bronté	.	Commander-in-Chief
John Scott, Esq.	.	Secretary
C. W. Adair	.	Captain, Royal Marines
William Ram	.	9th lieutenant, R.N.
Robert Smith	.	Midshipman
Thomas Whipple	.	Captain's clerk.
James Mansel	.	Ab. <sup>1</sup>
Thomas Daniels	.	L.M. <sup>1</sup>
Thomas Thomas (1st)	.	Ab.
James North	.	Ordinary <sup>1</sup>
Alfred Taylor	.	Do.
James Parke	.	Do.
William Shaw	.	L.M.

<sup>1</sup> “Ab.” stands for Able Seaman; “Ordinary” for Ordinary Seaman; “L.M.” for Landman or Landsmen, the lowest general rating on board a man-of-war, comprising new and raw hands for the most part not yet worked up into shape, though capable of deck duties and at the guns.

Richard Jewell	.	Ordinary
Charles Davis (1st)	.	Do.
John Bowlin	.	L.M.
William Brown (1st)	.	Ab.
William Mark	.	Do.
George Smith (1st)	.	L.M.
John Wharton	.	Ordinary
John King	.	Quarter-gunner
Robert Davison	.	Ab.
Edward Waters	.	Do.
John Cowarden	.	Ordinary
William Thompson (3rd)	.	Ab.
Thomas Johnson	.	Quartermaster
Andrew Sack	.	Yeoman of signals
Alexander Walker	.	Ab.
Arthur Hervin	.	Ordinary
John Welch (2nd)	.	Ab.
William Skinner	.	Ordinary
Joseph Ward	.	Do.
James Skinner	.	Do.
Stephen Sabine	.	3rd class (boy)
George Welch	.	2nd class (boy)
Collin Turner	.	3rd class (boy)

*Royal Marines*

George Cochran	.	Corporal
James Berry	.	Drummer
James Green	.	Private
John Brown (1st)	.	Do.
Lambert Myers	.	Do.
Samuel Wilks	.	Do.
George Kennedy	.	Do.
Daniel Hillier	.	Do.
John Brannon	.	Do.
James Norgrove	.	Do.



Jeremiah G. Lewis	.	Private
George Wilmott	.	Do.
Bernard McNamara	.	Do.
John Ebbsworth	.	Do.
William Coburne	.	Do.
William Jones	.	Do.
William Perry	.	Do.
John Palmer	.	Do.

WOUNDED DANGEROUSLY

John Pasco	.	Signal-lieutenant, R.N.
William Rivers (2nd)	.	Midshipman
Alexander Palmer <sup>1</sup>	.	Do.
John Bush	.	Ordinary
Daniel McPherson	.	L.M.
John Bergen	.	Ordinary
Henry Cramwell <sup>1</sup>	.	L.M.
William Jones (3rd)	.	Do.
Hans Andersen	.	Ab.
David Buchan	.	Do.
Joseph Gordon <sup>1</sup>	.	Ordinary
William Smith (2nd) <sup>1</sup>	.	Do.
John Smith (2nd)	.	Do.
John Saunders	.	3rd class (boy)

*Marines*

William Taft	.	Corporal
Thomas Raynor	.	Private
John Gregory	.	Do.
William Knight	.	Do.
James Bengass	.	Do.
William Wells	.	Do.
Benjamin Cook	.	Do.
James Hines	.	Do.

<sup>1</sup> Died of their wounds in the week following the battle.

Benjamin Matthews	.	Private
Thomas Wilson	.	Do.
Nicholas Dear	.	Do.

## BADLY WOUNDED

George M. Bligh	.	6th lieutenant, R.N.
Lewis B. Reeves	.	2nd lieutenant, R.M.
William Honnor	.	Quarter-gunner
Jeremiah Sullivan	.	Ab.
Peter Hale	.	L.M.
Thomas Green (1st)	.	Ab.
John Francois	.	Ordinary
William Castle	.	Ab.
George Burton	.	Ordinary
James Parker	.	Do.
Edward Dunn	.	Do.
Edward Padden	.	Private, R.M.

## SLIGHTLY WOUNDED

J. G. Peake	.	1st lieutenant, R.M.
George A. Westphal	.	Midshipman
Richard Bulkeley	.	Do.
John Geoghegan	.	Clerk to agent victualler
Josiah McPherson	.	L.M.
Thomas Graham	.	Ordinary
Thomas Collard	.	Ab.
Robert Phillips	.	L.M.
John Kinsale	.	Ordinary
Charles Legge	.	L.M.
David Conn	.	Do.
Daniel Leary	.	Ab.
William Taylor	.	Ordinary
John Simm	.	Ab.
Samuel Cooper	.	Do.
William Gillett	.	Ordinary
John Bornkworth	.	Do.

Robert Gibson	. Ab.
Angus McDonald	. Do.
George Quinton	. Quarter-gunner
Edward Grey .	. Ordinary
Samuel Brown	. Yeoman of powder-room
William Butler	. Ab.
Samuel Lovett	. Do.
Daniel Munro	. Do.
James Curry .	. Do.
Michael McDonald	. Ordinary
William Fall .	. Ab.
Michael Pennill	. Do.
Thomas Pain .	. Do.
John Knight .	. Boatswain's mate

*Marines*

Giovanni Giunti	. Private
Charles Chappele	. Do.
Samuel Green .	. Do.
James Fagen .	. Do.
Isaac Harris .	. Do.
John Dutton .	. Do.
George Graves	. Do.
James Rogers .	. Do.
George Coulston	. Do.
Nicholas le Contre	. Do.
Thomas Crofton	. Do.

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Killed . . . .	54
Dangerously wounded . .	25
Badly wounded . . . .	12
Slightly wounded . . . .	42 "

One or two eye-witnesses' accounts from on board the *Victory*, at and immediately after Trafalgar, give

interesting glimpses of what went on in the ship during the fight. First of all, there is the formal, matter-of-fact tale as set out in the log:—

“At 11.30 the enemy opened upon the *Royal Sovereign*. At 11.40 the *Royal Sovereign* commenced firing on the enemy. At 11.50, the enemy began firing on us and the *Téméraire*.

“At noon, standing for the enemy's tenth ship, with all possible (sail) set. Light airs and cloudy. Standing towards the enemy's van with all sail set. At 4 minutes past 12, opened our fire on the enemy's van in keeping down their line. At 20 minutes past 12, in attempting to pass through the enemy's line, we fell on board of the 10th and 11th ships, when the action became general. About 1.15, the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., and Commander-in-Chief was wounded in the shoulder.

“At 1.30 the *Redoutable* having struck her colours we ceased firing our starboard guns, but continued engaging the *Santisima Trinidad* and some of the enemy's ships on the larboard side. Observed the *Téméraire* between the *Redoutable* and another French ship of the Line, both of which had struck. Observed the *Royal Sovereign* with the loss of her main and mizen-masts, and some of the enemy's ships around her dismasted. At 3.10 observed four sail of the enemy's van tack and stand along our line to windward. Fired our larboard guns at those which could reach them. At 3.40 made the signal for our ships to keep their wind and

engage the enemy's van coming along our weather line. At 4.15 the Spanish Rear-Admiral to windward struck to some of our ships which had tacked after them. Observed one of the enemy's ships blow up, and 14 sail of the enemy standing towards Cadiz, and 3 sail of the enemy standing to the southward. Partial firing continued until 4.30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., and Commander-in-Chief, he then died of his wound."

Then we have this personal narrative from one of the men on deck, as told in a quaint letter which James Bagley, a marine of the *Victory*, wrote home to his sister, while the ship was lying at Spithead with Nelson's body on board, awaiting orders to proceed round to the Nore:—

"*Victory*, SPITHEAD, Dec. 5, 1805.

"DEAR SISTER,

"Comes with my kind love to you are in good health so thank God I am; for I am very certain that it is by his mercy that me and my country is, and you and your religion is kept up; for it has pleased the Almighty God for to give us a complete victory of the combined fleets of France and Spain; for there was a signal for them being out of Cadiz the 19th of October, but we did not see them till the 21st, in the morning, and about 12 o'clock we gave three cheers, and then the engagement began very hot on both sides, but about five o'clock the victory was ours, and twenty sail-of-the-line struck to us. They

had 34 sail-of-the-line and we had 27 of the line, but the worst of it was, the flower of the country, Lord Nelson, got wounded at twelve minutes past one o'clock, and closed his eyes in the midst of victory. Dear sister, it pleased the Lord to spare my life, and my brother Thomas his, for he was with the same gentleman. It was very sharp for us, I assure you, for we had not a moment's time till it was over, and the 23rd of the same instant we got a most shocking gale of wind, and we expected to go to the bottom, but, thanks be to God, He had mercy on us, for every ship of ours got safe into harbour, and all the French but four got knocked to pieces on the rocks. So that is the most I can tell you of it, for the English is in a right cause you may depend on it, or else the Lord would not have had the mercy on us as He has had, for we made five ships strike to the ship has I am in. We had 125 killed and wounded, and 1500 in the English fleet killed and wounded, and the enemy 12,000; so I shall leave you to judge how your country fight for the religion you enjoy, the laws you possess, and on the other hand how Bounaparte has trampt them causes down in the places he has had concern with, for nothing but torment is going forward. So never think it is disgrace to having brothers in service; but I have had pretty well on it, and when you write to our mother, give my love to my sister Betty and my poor mother, and send me word about her and you shall have your loving brother's thanks. So must conclude with hoping this will bring you peace and

love and unity. Then you and me and our dear mother will meet together to enjoy the fruits of the island as I have been fighting for. My dear, I shall just give you a description of Lord Nelson. He is a man about five feet seven, very slender, of an affable temper; but a rare man for his country, and has been in 123 actions and skirmishes, and got wounded with a small ball, but it was mortal. It was his last words, that it was his lot for me to go, but I am going to heaven, but never haul down your colours to France, for your men will stick to you. These words was to Captain Hardy, and so we did, for we came off victorious, and they have behaved well to us, for they wanted to take Lord Nelson from us, but we told Captain as we brought him out we would bring him home; so it was so, and he was put into a cask of spirits. So I must conclude. Your loving brother,

“JAMES BAGLEY.”<sup>1</sup>

After her arrival in English waters with Nelson's body on board, the *Victory*, while on her way round to the Nore, was delayed for some days by head winds in the Downs. A very interesting letter from a visitor to her, dated from Dover, the 16th of December, 1805, is in existence.

“I am just come from on board the *Victory*,” says the writer. “She is very much mauled, both in her hull and rigging, has upwards of 80 shot between

<sup>1</sup> The letter was published in some of the newspapers in the last week of December, 1805. According to the *Victory's* muster book there was a “James Bagley” among the Marines.

wind and water : the foremast is very badly wounded indeed, and though strongly fished, has sunk about six inches : the main-mast also is badly wounded, and very full of musket shots : she has a jury-mizen mast, and fore and main top masts, and has a great many shot in her bowsprit and bows ; one of the figures which support the Arms has both the legs shot off. I clearly ascertained that Lord Nelson was killed by a shot from the main top of the *Redoubtable* : he was standing on the starboard side of the quarter-deck with his face to the stern when the shot struck him, and was carried down into one of the wings : he lived about one hour, and was perfectly sensible until within five minutes of his death. When carrying down below, although in great pain, he observed the tiller ropes were not sufficiently tight, and ordered tackles to be got on them, which now remain. The ship he engaged was so close that they did not fire their great guns on board the enemy, but only musketry ; and manned the rigging on board ; but nearly the whole that left the deck were killed. The ship had 25 guns dismounted by the *Victory's* fire. A shot carried away four spokes from the wheel of the *Victory*, and never killed or wounded any of the men steering. Temporary places have been fitted up between the decks for the wounded men, which are warmed by stoves."

We will take our leave of the *Victory* for the present with a second letter, dated "Sheerness, the 24th of December," on the *Victory's* arrival in the Medway, bound for her home port, Chatham, to



repair there after the battle. It was just two days after Nelson's remains had been removed to Greenwich Hospital on the way to St. Paul's.

“The inhabitants of this place had yesterday the satisfaction of welcoming the old *Victory* and her gallant crew to the River Medway: the noble ship passed close to the Garrison Point, and was received with an enthusiastic cheering from the shore, which was returned by her crew. The civilities of the officers of the *Victory* have been beyond belief in satisfying the anxious curiosity of numbers who have been on board to see the ship and the spot where our gallant Nelson fell and died. The fatal bullet that deprived him of his valuable life is in the possession of the surgeon of the *Victory*, just as he extracted it from the body, with part of the epaulet and coat adhering to it. Many of the poor wounded fellows are on board, nearly well and in good spirits. The bullets in the lower part of the mainmast are so thick that it is surprising how anyone on the quarter-deck could have escaped, especially the brave Captain Hardy, whose amiable character seems to be the greatest alleviation the officers and crew of the *Victory* have for the loss of their Nelson.”

## UNDER FIRE WITH COLLINGWOOD

And when the loving cup's in hand,  
And Honour leads the cry,  
They know not old Northumberland  
Who'll pass his memory by.

When Nelson sailed from Trafalgar  
With all his country's best,  
He held them dear as brothers are,  
But one beyond the rest !

THE splendid service that the *Royal Sovereign* rendered on the 21st of October, 1805, should appeal to every British man and boy. In the words of Captain Blackwood—"Nelson's Blackwood"—who watched the fight, written immediately after the battle, "of the *Victory* and the *Royal Sovereign* it is impossible to say which achieved the most." The *Royal Sovereign* had been with Nelson off Toulon in 1804. She had gone home to refit when Nelson went across the Atlantic in pursuit of Admiral Villeneuve. She rejoined the British fleet off Cadiz just ten days before Trafalgar, when Collingwood, who had hitherto had his flag in the *Dreadnought*, moved into her.

Two interesting preliminary glimpses of Admiral Collingwood on board the *Royal Sovereign*, on the morning of Trafalgar Day, are given us by his biographer, Mr. G. L. Newnham Collingwood, who had access to the Admiral's papers and letters after his death, and took all possible pains to get together

everything that could be gathered about him from those who served with Collingwood in the great battle.

Admiral Collingwood's "personal conduct on that memorable day well deserves to be recorded. It has been said that no man is a hero in the eyes of his valet de chambre, but that this is not universally true is proved by the account which was given . . . by Mr. Smith, Admiral Collingwood's valued servant. 'I entered the Admiral's cabin,' he observed, 'about daylight, and found him already up and dressing. He asked if I had seen the French fleet, and on my replying that I had not, he told me to look out at them, adding that in a very short time we should see a great deal more of them. I then observed a crowd of ships to leeward, but I could not help looking with still greater interest at the Admiral, who, during all this time, was shaving himself with a composure that quite astonished me.' "

This is what Collingwood said to his flag-lieutenant and the other officers, on the Admiral's first coming up on deck: "Admiral Collingwood dressed himself that morning with peculiar care, and soon after, meeting Lieutenant Clavell, advised him to pull off his boots. 'You had better,' he said, 'put on silk stockings, as I have done; for if one should get a shot in the legs, they would be so much more manageable for the surgeon.' He then proceeded to visit the decks, encouraged the men to the discharge of their duty, and, addressing the officers, said to them, 'Now, gentlemen, let us do something to-day which the world may talk of hereafter.' "

Then we have this incident, which occurred in the forenoon, as the British fleet was closing on the enemy :—

“Lord Nelson had been requested by Captain Blackwood (who was anxious for the preservation of so invaluable a life) to allow some other vessel to take the lead, and at last gave permission that the *Téméraire* should go ahead of him, but resolving to defeat the order which he had given, he crowded more sail on the *Victory* and maintained his place. The *Royal Sovereign* was far in advance when Lieutenant Clavell observed that the *Victory* was setting her studding-sails, and with that spirit of honourable emulation which prevailed between the squadrons, and particularly between these two ships, he pointed it out to Admiral Collingwood, and requested his permission to do the same. ‘The ships of our line,’ replied the Admiral, ‘are not yet sufficiently up for us to do so now, but you may be getting ready.’ The studding-sail and royal halliards were accordingly manned, and in about ten minutes the Admiral, observing Lieutenant Clavell’s eyes fixed upon him with a look of expectation, gave him a nod, on which that officer went to Captain Rotherham and told him that the Admiral desired him to make all sail. The order was then given to rig out and hoist away, and in one instant the ship was under a crowd of sail, and went rapidly ahead. The Admiral then directed the officers to see that all the men lay down on the decks and were kept quiet.”

The *Royal Sovereign’s* captain at Trafalgar, Col-

lingwood's flag-captain, was, like his Admiral, a gallant Northumbrian, Edward Rotherham, the son of a Hexham doctor. Of him that day the following story is told. As the battle was about to open, it was pointed out to Captain Rotherham that the unusually big cocked hat that he wore would probably render him a special target for the marksmen in the enemy's tops. "Let me alone," was all Rotherham's reply, "Let me alone. I've always fought in a cocked hat and I always will!"

As pre-arranged by Nelson, the British lee column at Trafalgar, fifteen ships strong, began the action before the weather column, by leading down and breaking the enemy's line near its centre. The manœuvre was begun a few minutes before noon, when, at Collingwood's order, the *Sovereign*, with every sail set and every reef shaken out, dashed forward by herself, sailing "like a frigate," ahead of the whole British fleet. Taking on herself the fire of the enemy's line, centre and rear, as she advanced, she swept resistlessly under the stern of the Spanish flagship *Santa Anna*, a gigantic 112-gun three-decker, nearly a mile in front of Collingwood's second astern, the *Belleisle*—"the most remarkable incident of the battle, a feat unparalleled in naval history," as it has been called. "See," exclaimed Nelson with delight to Captain Hardy, as he watched the *Sovereign's* advance; "see how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into

action!" Just at the moment, as it happened, on the *Royal Sovereign's* quarter-deck, Collingwood himself was saying to his captain, "Rotherham, what would not Nelson give to be here!"

We know from what a French officer at Trafalgar wrote, that the confident daring of the *Sovereign's* single-handed advance "positively appalled Villeneuve!"<sup>1</sup>

King George the Third, in effigy, led his own fleet that day. The *Royal Sovereign's* figure-head was an immense full-length carving of the King, represented in the battle-day panoply of a Roman Emperor, his sword at his side and a sceptre in hand, his red war cloak (*paludamentum*) on his shoulders, with two attendant winged figures, Fortune and Fame, blowing trumpets on either side.

As the *Sovereign* closed on the enemy, a French ship, the *Fougueux*, ranged up close under the stern of the *Santa Anna*, as though to bar the passage through the line to Collingwood. Captain Rotherham noted this, and pointed it out to the Admiral. Collingwood's reply was: "Steer straight for the Frenchman and take his bowsprit!" So they closed, and then, driving through the line just under the towering Spanish's ship's stern, the *Sovereign* opened

<sup>1</sup> See "The Enemy at Trafalgar" for what they witnessed from the French and Spanish fleet; also for a Spanish picture of Collingwood's duel with the Spanish admiral.



*French flag-ship, "Bucentaure," 80 guns. "Redoutable," 74 guns, from which Nelson was shot. "Royal Sovereign" opening the attack. The "Victory" (Nelson's flag should be at the fore, not as here.)*  
*AS SKETCHED ON THE SPOT BY A FRENCH OFFICER*  
*From a photograph of the original sepia drawing now in the possession of a descendant of Captain Lucas of the "Redoutable."*





the fight with her full broadside treble-shotted. The terrific discharge, at one blow, it has been related, disabled fourteen guns, and put a large part of the crew *hors de combat*. "El rompio todos" were the words of an officer of the *Santa Anna*. After that the *Sovereign* ranged alongside the big Spaniard to leeward to fight the battle out gun-muzzle to gun-muzzle.

"In passing the *Santa Anna*," relates Mr. Newnham Collingwood, "the *Royal Sovereign* gave her a broadside and a half into her stern, tearing it down, and killing and wounding 400 of her men. Then, with her helm hard a-starboard, she ranged up alongside so closely that the lower yards of the two vessels were locked together. The Spanish Admiral, having seen that it was the intention of the *Royal Sovereign* to engage to leeward, had collected all his strength on the starboard, and such was the weight of the *Santa Anna's* metal, that her broadside made the *Sovereign* heel two strakes out of the water."

Even a moment like that, though, did not in the least perturb Collingwood. "Her studding-sails and halliards were now shot away, and as well as a top-gallant studding-sail were hanging over the gangway hammocks. Admiral Collingwood called out to Lieutenant Clavell to come and help him to take it in, observing that they should want it again some other day. These two officers accordingly rolled it carefully up and placed it in a boat."

No sooner was the *Sovereign* alongside the *Santa Anna* than four other enemies—two French ships,

the *Fougueux* and the *Indomptable*, and two Spanish, the *San Leandro* and the *San Justo*—closed round and joined in to help the *Santa Anna*.

So hot a cross fire did these four ships keep up on the single British ship during her, at first, unsupported fight, that, in the words of those on board the *Sovereign*, "We could see their shots meeting and smashing together in mid-air round us." The *Fougueux*, we are also told, "at one time got so much on the quarter of the *Sovereign* that she almost touched." It was indeed a battle of the giants—a heroic defiance of heroic odds.

So magnificent, indeed, did the situation of the *Royal Sovereign* appear, fighting single-handed in the thick of the enemy, that it drew remarks from some of our captains, for the time being lookers-on, on board the nearest ships that were then coming up astern. "The English ships," to quote Admiral Collingwood's biographer again, "were pressing forward with their utmost speed in support of their leader, but doubtful at times of his fate, and rejoicing when, on the slackening of the *Santa Anna's* fire, they discerned his flag still flying above the smoke. One of his most gallant followers and friend, the captain of the *Tonnant*, has often expressed the astonishment with which he regarded the *Royal Sovereign* as she opened her fire, which, as he declared, 'so arrested his attention, that he felt for a few moments as if he himself had nothing to do but to look on and admire!'"

How Collingwood bore himself in the battle we hear from two sources. Both accounts speak of

Collingwood's unmoved demeanour and cool courage under fire.

"The Admiral," says one," directed Captain Vallack, of the Marines, an officer of the greatest gallantry, to take his men from off the poop, that they might not be unnecessarily exposed; but he remained there himself much longer. At length, descending to the quarter-deck, he visited the men, enjoining them not to fire a shot in waste; looking himself along the guns to see that they were properly pointed, and commending the sailors, particularly a black man, who was afterwards killed, but who, while he stood beside him, fired ten times directly into the portholes of the *Santa Anna*."

"The Admiral spoke to me," related Smith, Collingwood's servant, "about the middle of the action and again for five minutes immediately after its close; and on neither occasion could I observe the slightest change from his ordinary manner. This, at the moment, made an impression on me which will never be effaced, for I wondered how a person whose mind was occupied by such a variety of most important concerns could, with the utmost ease and equanimity, inquire kindly after my welfare, and talk of common matters as if nothing of any consequence were taking place."

Twenty minutes after the *Sovereign* had by herself beaten off the *Fougueux*, the leading British ships following astern of the *Sovereign* began to reach the spot, and to take off her enemies one by one, except the *Santa Anna*. With Admiral Alava's flagship the

*Royal Sovereign* continued in close encounter, until the *Santa Anna's* colours came down. It was just at that moment that Collingwood received, by an officer of the *Victory*, Captain Hardy's first message that Lord Nelson had been "dangerously wounded."

The stubborn stand that the *Santa Anna* made was a disappointment, it would appear, to the *Sovereign's* men. Their terrible raking broadside at the outset had plainly "sickened" the Spaniards—as our men expressively put it—and many on board believed that the enemy must surrender forthwith. Captain Rotheram, indeed, "came up to the Admiral, and, shaking him by the hand, said: 'I congratulate you, sir; she is slackening her fire, and must soon strike!'" The gallant fellows who were fighting at the *Royal Sovereign's* guns actually thought, it is on record, that their ship would have the proud distinction of capturing an enemy's flagship in the midst of her own fleet before another British ship had got into action. In the end, though, they had this consolation: when at length the *Santa Anna* did surrender; "No ship besides ourselves fired a shot at her," wrote one of the *Sovereign's* officers, "and you can have no conception how completely she was ruined." "Her side," wrote Collingwood himself, "was almost entirely beat in."

"The *Santa Anna*," to quote Mr. Newnham Collingwood, "struck at half-past two o'clock, about the time when the news of Lord Nelson's wound was communicated to Admiral Collingwood, but the *Royal Sovereign* had been so much injured in her

masts and yards by the ships that lay on her bow and quarter that she was unable to alter her position. Admiral Collingwood accordingly called the *Euryalus* to take her in tow, and make the necessary signals. He dispatched Captain Blackwood to convey the Spanish Admiral on board the *Euryalus*, but he was stated to be at the point of death, and Captain Blackwood returned with the Spanish captain. That officer had already been to the *Royal Sovereign* to deliver his sword, and on entering had asked one of the English sailors the name of the ship. When he was told that it was the *Royal Sovereign*, he replied, in broken English, while patting one of the guns with his hand, 'I think she should be called the *Royal Devil!*'"

The *Royal Sovereign*, on the *Santa Anna* surrendering, pushed off from her giant prize—so big a ship, indeed, that, in Collingwood's own words, she "towered over the *Sovereign* like a castle." She moved away to seek another enemy. But the fall of her main and mizen-masts, cut through and through by shot, prevented her from taking a further part in the battle until after being taken in tow by the *Euryalus* frigate, Captain Blackwood's ship. The *Sovereign* was able after that, during the rest of the action, to employ her broadsides here and there. Her last piece of work was at the very close of the battle, when she formed one of the group of ships that Captain Hardy summoned round the *Victory* to support the dying chief's flagship against a threatened attack on the *Victory* from the fresh ships of the

French van squadron as they passed down the line.

The *Royal Sovereign's* list of casualties, as officially reported on the morning after Trafalgar, amounted to forty-seven men killed and ninety-four wounded.

How Collingwood first heard of Nelson's fate he himself has told us :

"When my dear friend received his wound," wrote the Admiral, "he immediately sent an officer to tell me of it, and give his love to me. Though the officer was directed to say the wound was not dangerous, I read in his countenance what I had to fear, and before the action was over Captain Hardy came to inform me of his death. I cannot tell you how deeply I was affected ; my friendship for him was unlike any thing that I have left in the Navy—a brotherhood of more than thirty years."

Writing to the Duke of Clarence, an old service friend of Collingwood's and of Nelson's as well, he said this :

"He (Nelson) sent an officer to inform me that he was wounded. I asked the officer if his wound was dangerous. He hesitated, then said he hoped it was not ; but I saw the fate of my friend in his eye, for his look told what his tongue could not utter. About an hour after, when the action was over, Captain Hardy brought me the melancholy account of his death."

Another detail of Trafalgar that may be news to

some of us is the fact that Collingwood was wounded in the battle. He said nothing about himself to any one in any of his letters at the time, nor did he include himself in the return of wounded sent to the Admiralty. It was only in response to an anxious inquiry from his wife, who, some months afterwards, heard a rumour about it and wrote to inquire, that Collingwood, five months after the battle, first made mention of the matter. His letter to Lady Collingwood is dated March 29, 1806, and in it the Admiral says :

“Did I not tell you how my leg was hurt? It was by a splinter—a pretty severe blow. I had a good many thumps, one way or the other : one on the back, which I think was the wind of a great shot, for I never saw anything that did it. You know nearly all were killed or wounded on the quarter-deck or poop but myself, my Captain, and Secretary, Mr. Cosway, who was of more use to me than any officer after Clavell.

“The first inquiry of the Spaniards was about my wound, and exceedingly surprised they were when I made light of it, for when the captain of the *Santa Anna* was brought on board, it was bleeding and swelled, and tied up with a handkerchief.”

What was really troubling the frugal north-country mind of Admiral Collingwood at that moment, as far as he was individually concerned, far more than his wound, was his out-of-pocket expenses owing to the damage that the enemy's shot had done in his

steward's store-room. Writing to Lady Collingwood, he tells her this :—

“I have had a great destruction of my furniture and stock. I have hardly a chair that has not a shot in it, and many have lost both legs and arms, without hope of pension. My wine was broke in moving, and my pigs were slain in battle, and these are heavy losses where they cannot be replaced.”

One gets an idea of the kind of man Collingwood was also from the characteristically sympathetic way in which he wrote in a private letter about one of his officers (Mr. William Chalmers, the master of the *Royal Sovereign*) who was killed near the Admiral, on the quarter-deck, at his post by the wheel.

“I have written to Lloyd's about Mr. Chalmers' family. He left a mother and several sisters, whose chief dependence was on what this worthy man and valuable officer saved for them from his pay. He stood close to me when he received his death. A great shot almost divided his body ; he laid his head upon my shoulder, and told me he was slain. I supported him till two men carried him off. He could say nothing to me, but to bless me ; but as they carried him down, he wished he could but live to read the account of the action in a newspaper. He lay in the cockpit, among the wounded, until the *Santa Anna* struck, and joining in the cheer which they gave her, expired with it on his lips.”

The only personal description of Collingwood's



appearance in existence is from the pen of a young officer (Midshipman Crawford, of the *Royal George*) who had an audience of him, to present a letter of introduction, in October, 1806, just a year after Trafalgar :

“Being provided with a letter of recommendation to Lord Collingwood, the Commander-in-Chief, I took an early opportunity to wait upon his Lordship. . . . Lord Collingwood was between fifty and sixty, thin and spare in person, which was then slightly bent, and in height about five feet ten inches. His head was small, with a pale, smooth, round face, the features of which would pass without notice, were it not for the eyes, which were blue, clear, penetrating ; and the mouth, the lips of which were thin and compressed, indicating firmness and decision of character. He wore his hair powdered, and tied in a *queue*, in the style of officers of his age at that time ; and his clothes were squared and fashioned after the strictest rules of the good old sea school. To his very ample coat, which had a stiff, stand-up collar, were appended broad and very long skirts—the deep flaps of his single-breasted white waistcoat, descending far below his middle, covered a portion of his thighs ; and blue knee-breeches, with white stockings, and buckles to his shoes, completed his attire. . . .

“On entering his presence, he took a rapid searching survey of me from head to foot ; then . . . in a quiet tone, amounting almost to gentleness, he put a few questions to me in nautics, which I believe I answered to his satisfaction.”

Of Collingwood in lighter vein we also get a glimpse. How, a short time after Trafalgar, he got one of his officers to write up his biography for a pertinacious newspaper editor is a story that the Admiral himself tells in a letter to his wife.

“The editors of the *Naval Chronicle* have written to me for the history of my life and progress, for which they are pleased to say the world is very impatient. Now this rather embarrasses me, for I never could bear the trumpeter of his own praise. So, to get rid of it as well as I can, I have employed — to write a history for me. For my birth and parentage he has selected two or three chapters of Bamfylde Moore Carew; for my service in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main he has had good assistance in the *History of the Buccaneers*; and for my shipwreck he has copied a great deal out of *Robinson Crusoe*; all which, with a few anecdotes from the *Lives of the Admirals*, a little distorted, will make, I am inclined to think, a very respectable piece of biography.”

Collingwood's dog, Bounce, was on board the *Royal Sovereign* at Trafalgar, tied up out of the way below, in comparative safety, on the orlop deck. According to Collingwood himself, Bounce did not like cannon firing. Wrote Collingwood about him, before the battle: “Bounce is my only pet now, and he is indeed a good fellow; he sleeps by the side of my cot, whenever I lie in one, until near the time of tacking, and then marches off, to be out of the hearing of the guns, for he is not reconciled to them

yet." After the battle, on his master being raised to the peerage, Bounce—as Collingwood whimsically describes in one of his home-letters—seemed to grasp the new situation and took to giving himself airs. "I am out of all patience with Bounce. The consequential airs he gives himself since he became a right honourable dog are insufferable. He considers it beneath his dignity to play with commoners' dogs, and truly thinks that he does them grace when he condescends to lift up his leg against them. This, I think, is carrying the insolence of rank to the extreme, but he is a dog that does it!"<sup>1</sup>

As all the world knows, Collingwood never set foot in England after Trafalgar, doomed, poor homesick fellow, never more to see—

The pleasant strand of Northumberland  
And the lordly towers thereby.

He wore out his life on duty, waiting and watching at sea for nearly five long and weary years, for an enemy who did not dare to face him. The Admiralty could not spare him to come home.

"He stepped into his boat from Plymouth Dock," says the writer of a biographical sketch of Collingwood published shortly after the Admiral's death,

<sup>1</sup> Bounce remained Collingwood's faithful companion to the end; all through those five long, weary years of continuous cruising between Cadiz and the Dardanelles and off Toulon, until just before, for the worn out, prematurely-aged warrior himself, death came at length to close his sufferings, poor Bounce one dark night fell overboard and was seen no more.

"on the last day of April, 1805, and returned, five years after, a peer and a corpse." Immediately before he embarked, Collingwood had been conversing with a brother officer, who records an affecting incident. "The last time I ever saw Lord Collingwood," wrote Sir T. Byam Martin, "he was on the point of stepping into his boat, never again to touch the British shore. We walked together for half an hour, and as long as I live I shall remember the words with which, in his accustomed mildness of expression, he alluded to the sacrifices our professional duties exact of us. He told me the number of years he had been married, and the number of days he had been with his family since the war commenced (then of many years duration). 'My family are *actually strangers to me.*' He was greatly overcome by the feelings thus excited, and, taking me by the hand, he said, 'What a life of privation is ours—what an abandonment of everything to our professional duty, *and how little do the people of England know the sacrifices we make for them!*' With this he turned from me to hide the tear which ran down his manly cheek, and saying 'Farewell!' walked to his boat."

Slowly killed, if ever man was, by downright hard work, Collingwood died on the 7th of March, 1810, on board his flagship in the Mediterranean. On the day before he died his old spirit flickered up once more, and he murmured to his captain, who bent down over the brave old face, "I may live to fight the French once more." The end drew on

apace after that, and the soul of one of the grandest veterans of England at her best, passed calmly away to the presence of the God in Whom throughout every hour of his blameless life his trust had been as that of a little child for its earthly father. "He met death," said the surgeon who attended Collingwood, "as became him, with composure and a fortitude which have seldom been equalled and never surpassed."

We know something of how his sailors loved "Old Cuddy," as the whole fleet called Collingwood, from what happened at Collingwood's funeral on that May day of 1810, when Nelson's brother-in-arms was laid to his rest beside his old messmate, friend, and companion in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral. Lord Chancellor Eldon, beside whom, as a little boy of nine, the Admiral had sat in class at school, was a mourner at the funeral. "It was very affecting," he describes, "his sailors crowded so around, all anxious to see the last of their commander. One sailor seized me by the arm, and entreated that I would take him in with me that he might be there to the end. I told him to stick fast to me, and I did take him in; but when it came to throwing some earth on the coffin (you know the part of the service 'dust to dust'), he burst past me and threw himself into the vault!"

No truer description of the man as a fact was ever penned than the words that Thackeray years afterwards used of Collingwood: "Another true knight of those days was Cuthbert Collingwood, and I think

since heaven made gentlemen, there is not record of a better one than that."

Collingwood's officers at Trafalgar, those who served with him on board the *Royal Sovereign*, were these. According to the muster book the ship was two lieutenants short on the 21st of October.

Captain—Edward Rotherham.

Lieutenants—John Clavell, Joseph Simmons, James Bashford (wounded), Edward Barker, Brice Gilliland (killed), Francis Blower Gibbes.

Master—William Chalmers (killed).

Surgeon—Richard Lloyd.

Purser—Brinsley S. Oliver.

Chaplain—Rev. John Rudall.

Secretary—W. R. Cosway.

Gunner—Nicholas Brown.

Boatswain—Isaac Wilkinson (wounded).

Carpenter—George Clines.

Marine officers :—

Captain—Joseph Vallack.

Lieutenants—Robert Green (killed), Armiger W. Hubbard, James Le Vescomte (wounded).

Assistant Surgeons—Primrose Lyon, Henry Towsey.

Master's Mates and Midshipmen—Thomas Altoft, Charles A. Antram, Richard Davison Pritchard, William Sharp, William Watson (wounded), John Aikenhead (killed), John Doling Morey, Sam Weddle, Thomas P. Robinson, Charles Couchet,

Joseph Del Carrotto, John Chaldecott, Henry Davis, William Budd Boreham, Gilbert Kennicott (wounded), Thomas Currell, Granville Thompson (wounded), George Castle, John Parr, Thomas Dickinson (wounded), John Campbell (wounded), Thomas Braund (mortally wounded), John Farrant (wounded), John Redwood, John Dobson, William Stock, James Rudall.

First Class Volunteers — Meredith Milnekoff, Robert Julian, Archibald Nagle, Robert Duke Hamilton, John Hill, Claudius Charles, William Lloyd, Charles Lambert, Charles Chiswick.

From the officers we proceed in natural sequence to the men, and with regard to these, at the outset, there hangs a tale.

A very curious story is related of Collingwood on the morning of Trafalgar Day which most of those who have written about him have repeated. Collingwood, we are told, as the British fleet was approaching the enemy, went round the decks of the *Royal Sovereign* and bade the men at the guns "show those fellows what the tars of the Tyne can do!" More than that, there is an old print in existence (a copy of which is in the possession of Earl Nelson) artistically depicting the story, and labelled with the legend, "Tars of the Tyne." The ship's books unfortunately give quite another version. There were fewer North countrymen on board the *Royal Sovereign* at Trafalgar, perhaps, than in any other ship

of the British fleet. Altogether, according to the muster book, there were in the ship hardly thirty all told, including Collingwood himself and Captain Rotherham and the youngsters, "the northern boys," as Collingwood called them. Of the seamen—A.B.'s, ordinary, and landmen—the *Sovereign's* books name only four as coming from Newcastle, two as coming from Shields, and one as coming from "Northumberland" at large. Sunderland sent four men, and the rest were from Durham, three men, with from Berwick-on-Tweed two, Whitehaven six, Westmorland one. That exhausts the North-country contingent in the *Royal Sovereign*.

More than a third of the entire ship's company on board were Irishmen—240 men and boys. Scotland, including Shetland and the Hebrides, contributed forty men, and Wales twenty-one. The London contingent with Collingwood at Trafalgar was the next largest after the Irishmen—seventy-five men and boys altogether. Lancashire was represented by forty-six men, Devon by thirty-four, Hampshire with thirty, Cornwall with twenty-four, Gloucester (Bristol) and Somerset each by eighteen, Yorkshire and Kent by ten men each; Lincolnshire, Cheshire, and Dorset each by eight; Norfolk and Suffolk by seven men each; and so on down to Cambridge, Bedford, Leicester, Hertfordshire, and Worcester with one man each.

Yet another interesting point is brought out by the muster book of the *Royal Sovereign*. We have been told how Collingwood, in the middle of the



fighting, commended a "black man" for his straight shooting. Apparently the man was a West Indian. There were no fewer than seventy foreigners and aliens on board Collingwood's flagship at Trafalgar, according to the ship's books, the list being thus made up: Twenty-four Americans (hailing for the most part from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Jersey); seven Dutchmen—Dirks and Franz's and Hendriks and Rutters—from Friesland, Delft, Maestricht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam; one Belgian, from Brussels; three Portuguese from the Azores and Lisbon; four Prussians and one Pole from Dantzic; two Danes, two Frenchmen, one Norwegian, one Venetian, one Neapolitan, one Maltese, seven Lascars—two of them entered as "Jonan" and "Lowannah"—from the East Indies; two Malays from Batavia, entered as "Soloman" and "Ballee"; one from Bengal, one from Madras, a third Malay entered as "George"; fifteen West Indians, from St. Kitts, Barbados, Jamaica, and from Berbice, in British Guiana.

Two interesting letters from the *Royal Sovereign* may serve to conclude our narrative. One was from a Hampshire lad, one of those fighting below at the guns. It runs thus:—

"Honoured Father,—This comes to tell you I am alive and hearty except three fingers; but that's not much, it might have been my head. I told brother Tom I should like to see a greadly [*sic*] battle, and I

have seen one, and we have peppered the Combined rarely ; and for the matter of that, they fought us pretty tightish for French and Spanish. Three of our mess are killed, and four more of us winged. But to tell you the truth of it, when the game began, I wished myself at Warnborough with my plough again ; but when they had given us one duster, and I found myself snug and tight, I . . . set to in good earnest, and thought no more about being killed than if I were at Murrell Green Fair, and I was presently as busy and as black as a collier. How my fingers got knocked overboard I don't know, but off they are, and I never missed them till I wanted them. You see, by my writing, it was my left hand, so I can write to you and fight for my King yet. We have taken a rare parcel of ships, but the wind is so rough we cannot bring them home, else I should roll in money, so we are busy smashing 'em, and blowing 'em up wholesale.

“Our dear Admiral Nelson is killed ! so we have paid pretty sharply for licking 'em. I never sat eyes on him, for which I am both sorry and glad ; for, to be sure, I should like to have seen him—but then, all the men in our ship who have seen him are such soft toads, they have done nothing but blast their eyes, and cry, ever since he was killed. God bless you ! chaps that fought like the devil, sit down and cry like a wench. I am still in the *Royal Sovereign*, but the Admiral has left her, for she is like a horse without a bridle, so he is in a frigate that he may be here and there and everywhere, for he's as *cute* as here and there one, and as bold as a lion, for all he

can cry !—I saw his tears with my own eyes, when the boat hailed and said my lord was dead. So no more at present from your dutiful son,—SAM.”

A pathetic interest attaches to the other letter. It was written on the morning of the battle by a midshipman of the *Royal Sovereign*, Mr. John Aikenhead, who was killed in the action. It was apparently meant for his parents and family in general :—

“ We have just piped to breakfast ; thirty-five sail, besides smaller vessels, are now on our beam, about three miles off. Should I, my dear parents, fall in defence of my King, let that thought console you. I feel not the least dread on my spirits. Oh my parents, sisters, brothers, dear grandfather, grandmother, and aunt, believe me ever yours !

“ Accept, perhaps for the last time, your brother's love ; be assured I feel for my friends, should I die in this glorious action—glorious, no doubt, it will be. Every British heart pants for glory. Our old Admiral (Admiral Collingwood) is quite young with the thoughts of it. If I survive, nothing will give me greater pleasure than embracing my dearest relations. Do not, in case I fall, grieve—it will be to no purpose. Many brave fellows will no doubt fall with me on both sides.”

The letter added that the writer had made his will and put it in his desk. It gave also a statement of the property deposited in his chest, with £10 savings, added since the will was made. “ Do not be surprised,” says the lad in his letter, “ to find £10 more—it is mine.”

## “OLD IRONSIDES” AND THE THIRD IN COMMAND

“*Britannia Victrix*”

THE 100-gun three-decker *Britannia*, was the flagship of the third in command at Trafalgar, Rear-Admiral the Earl of Northesk. In honour of the part that the *Britannia* took in the battle Lord Northesk was created a Knight of the Bath, and was granted by George the Third the right to place the name “Trafalgar” on his coat-of-arms, with special heraldic augmentations. Ever since 1805 the supporters of the heraldic shield of the earls of Northesk have each borne a staff with a Rear-Admiral of the White’s flag on it bearing the inscription, “*Britannia Victrix*.”

“Old Ironsides” was the *Britannia*’s every-day name in Nelson’s fleet, due to the fact, it is said, that the *Britannia* was the oldest man-of-war in the fighting line of the Navy. The veteran three-decker on the 21st of October, 1805, had been afloat just forty-three years and two days. She was our second *Britannia*, and the first three-decker launched in George the Third’s reign, the launch taking place at Portsmouth Dockyard on the 19th of October, 1762, in the presence of twenty thousand spectators, “who all had the pleasure of seeing as fine a launch as ever was seen.”

Trafalgar was the *Britannia's* fifth battle. She had had her first meeting with the enemy as flagship of the Second in Command in the "Grand Fleet" under Lord Howe, which achieved the relief of Gibraltar in 1782—a feat that nowadays perhaps we think little of, but which was thought enough of at the time for such a personage as Frederick the Great to write an autograph letter of congratulation on it to the British Admiral. After that she had taken part at Lord Hood's occupation of Toulon, in Admiral Hotham's two actions off Genoa and off Hyères, as commander-in-chief's flagship, and on the 14th of February, 1797, "Glorious Valentine's Day," as flagship of the second in command in the battle off Cape St. Vincent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Trafalgar was also, as it happened, the *Victory's* fifth fight. Collingwood's *Royal Sovereign* had been eighteen years launched, and had been twice in battle. The *Sovereign* also was actually the biggest ship in the British fleet that day, 2175 tons burthen, as compared with the 2162 tons of the *Victory*, and the 2091 tons of the *Britannia*. The *Téméraire*, again, was the hardest hitter in the whole fleet, owing to the exceptionally heavy ordnance that she carried on her upper deck. Of other ships, the *Agamemnon*, the third oldest ship present at Trafalgar, had fought her first two battles with Kempenfelt and Rodney—names that already had passed into history. Other ships of Nelson's fleet, contemporaries mostly of the *Royal Sovereign*, had taken part in as many as four fleet battles. Four of them had been in Lord Howe's fleet on the "Glorious First of June," three at St. Vincent, five with Nelson at the Nile, three at Copenhagen. Three of the *Britannia's* consorts—the *Belleisle*, the *Tonnant*, and the *Spartiate*—were French-built ships, prizes won in battle. Two of them, indeed, had been captured by Nelson himself at the Nile. The average age of the ships of Nelson's Trafalgar fleet was seventeen years, an age at which in the case of our modern-day battleships they are reckoned as off the active list and in sight of the sale list. Only six were less than five years old. One ship only was, so to speak, a new ship, the *Revenge*, in October, 1805, serving her first commission within seven months of leaving the stocks at Chatham Dockyard.

At Trafalgar the *Britannia* went into action as the fifth or sixth ship astern of the *Victory*. She had three of the enemy's ships firing on her as she ranged forward into the battle under full sail. She broke the enemy's line, firing both broadsides as she drove through, after which she engaged an 80-gun ship and promptly dismasted her opponent. A little later, we are told, a French officer "was seen to wave a white handkerchief from the quarter-deck in token of surrender." Leaving another of our ships to take possession, the *Britannia* passed on forthwith to deal with others of the enemy, and was constantly engaged, we are told, sometimes with two or three ships of the enemy at once and fighting on both broadsides.

This is how the *Britannia's* log records her part at Trafalgar, in the dry, matter-of-fact style usual with such documents :—

"12.50. We began to engage three of the enemy's ships, having opened their fire upon us while running down. 1.10. Observed the ship we were engaging on our larboard quarter totally dismasted, continued our course in order to break through the centre of the enemy's line, engaging on both sides in passing between their ships. At 3 passed through the line. 4.30. Hauled to the wind on the larboard tack per signal. 5.30. Ceased firing. Observed the *Achille*, a French line-of-battle ship, on fire, which soon after blew up."

Fortunately the log is not all that we have to rely upon for the story of the *Britannia's* doings

at Trafalgar. Some of the officers wrote down their experiences and impressions, from which we get a remarkably interesting idea of how things fared on board during the battle. Says, to begin with, Lieutenant John Barclay in his journal:—

“ $\frac{1}{2}$  past 12. Vice-Admiral Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, commenced the action, by an attack upon the whole of the enemy's rear, in the most gallant manner, and without any immediate prospect of support, from being so far ahead of the lee division. Took in our studding sails. About  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 1, Lord Nelson, after having sustained a most galling fire in running down, opened both sides of the *Victory* on the headmost ships of their centre division. He was close followed up by the *Téméraire*, *Neptune*, *Conqueror*, *Leviathan*, and this ship, and pushed through their line about the 14th from the van. Several raking shot called forth exertions about 10 minutes after our noble chief. Here began the din of war. It became impossible to trace farther except at intervals, when the smoke cleared away *a little*. At  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 1 the masts of the ship we were most particularly engaging (larboard side) fell by the board: supposed to be the *Bucentaure*, but without any flag observed flying. Continued edging on slowly, for there was very little wind, and our main topsail in particular was shot almost entirely from the yard. At 3, got to leeward of their line and hauled up a little on the larboard tack. Until  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 4 kept up a heavy fire occasionally on both sides on every French or Spanish ensign flying near

us, when we hauled to the wind on the larboard tack per signal.  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5, all firing ceased except from the *Achille*, a very fine French ship—wrapt in flames. The cutters instantly repaired to her assistance, and saved the crew, soon after which she blew up with a tremendous explosion.”

Signal-Midshipman John Wells, in a letter home, written during the week following the battle, has this to say of what he went through and witnessed :

“ I am very happy to say that the *Britannia* was certainly a very fortunate Ship during the whole time, as we had not above 10 killed and 41 wounded although we were the fourth Ship in Action and the last out of it, and I doubt not that it will be found that she does honour to all who belong to her, as our fire was not directed to One particular Ship, but as soon as one had struck to us we immediately made to others and at one time had five ships blazing away upon us, but we soon tired them out. As I told you before, I was stationed at the Signals and Colours in the time of Action and being on the Quarter Deck I had an opportunity of seeing the whole of the Sport, which I must own rather daunted me before the first or second broadside ; but after then I think I never should have been tired of drubing [*sic*] the Jokers, particulary [*sic*] when my ship mates began to fall arround [*sic*] me, which in the room of disheartening an Englishman only encourages him, as the sight of his Country Man’s blood makes his heart burn for revenge.



“I am very sorry to inform you that my worthy friend our signal Lieutenant was knocked down by a double-headed shot close by my side and immediately expired, much lamented by his brother Officers and every one in the Ship; I had several very narrow escapes from the Enemy’s Shot, but thanks be to the Lord he [*sic*] has still spared me thro’ his great goodness.

“Too much credit cannot be given to Lord Northesk and Captain Bullen for their gallant Conduct during the Engagement, indeed it was the case with every Officer and Man in the Ship. Immediately the Enemy had struck I went on board one of the French prizes to take possession of her, and when I got there I may well say I was shocked to see the sight as I believe there was not less than 3 or 400 Bodies lying about the Decks, cut and mangled all to pieces, some dying and others Dead. We took the remainder of the men that were alive on board of our own Ships, at which they seemed very glad. And from the Information that we can get from them they really came out of Cadiz with an intention of fighting, not thinking us to be above 17 sail of the line and them under the command of Sir Robt. Calder (but he was not with us at all), and that Lord Nelson was in England sick. So they thought they were an equal match for our 17 with there [*sic*] 37—and in fact made themselves so sure of taking us into Cadiz that several Private Gentlemen came out of Cadiz as passengers on purpose to see the Action and have the pleasure of towing us in, but they

were once more deceived in our Wooden Walls. Amongst the prisoners in our Ship there are 5 or 6 of these Gentlemen of pleasure, and I think they are in a fair way for seeing an English prison before they return to Cadiz again."

Another of the *Britannia's* officers, who made use of his opportunities for seeing what was going on round him, was 2nd Lieutenant L.B. Halloran of the Royal Marines. He noted this down in his private diary from his own personal experiences and observations :

"We piped to breakfast at eight o'clock, and the ship being clear and ready about nine o'clock, we went to quarters. The Fleet then formed in two lines, standing slowly and steadily, with every sail set, before the light breeze, with ensigns and colours flying. Our ship, the *Britannia*, was the third from the *Victory*, which led the Larboard or Lee line; we were next the *Neptune*, 98 guns. For some time after the men were at quarters, before the firing began we heard many of them amusing themselves with nautical jokes, or reciting scraps from a Prologue which I had spoken at one of our last Dramatic performances. Among the lines repeatedly quoted the following seemed the favourite :—

We have great guns of Tragedy loaded so well,  
If they do but go off, they will certainly tell.

"About 11.30, the *Royal Sovereign*, Admiral Collingwood, which led the Starboard or Weather line, after sustaining for nearly half an hour severe

firing from the enemy as she approached without returning a shot, opened her tremendous Broad-sides close alongside the *Sta. Anna*, a Spanish Admiral's ship. Our people were highly amused, and passed many jokes on seeing the *St. Anna*, almost immediately dismasted and falling out of line with her colours down. We had not much time to admire the gallantry of the *Royal Sovereign* and the ships succeeding her, for it was our turn to commence, and in passing we poured a most destructive fire (the guns being double-shotted) into the *Bucentaur*, which ship had already received the first fire of the *Victory* and *Neptune*. Her masts were at once swept away, and her galleries and stern broken to pieces; her Colours being shot away, some-one waved a white handkerchief from the remains of the Larboard Gallery in token of Surrender.

"We then encountered the *Santissima Trinidad*, 240 guns [*sic*] on four decks (the largest ship then known). We passed under stern of this magnificent Ship, and gave her a Broadside which shattered the rich display of sculpture, figures, ornaments, and inscriptions with which she was adorned. I never saw so beautiful a ship. Luffing up alongside her four-decked side, of a rich lake colour, she had an imposing effect.

"We proceeded, and now got into the middle of the Action, where the denseness of the smoke, the noise and din of Battle, were so great as to leave little time for observation. Nearly about this time, be-

tween one and two o'clock, a shot struck the muzzle of the gun at which I was stationed (the aftermost gun on the larboard side of the lower deck), and killed or wounded every one there stationed, myself and Midshipman Tompkins only excepted. The shot was a very large one, and split into a number of pieces, each of which took its victim. We threw the mangled body of John Jolley, a marine, out of the stern port, his stomach being shot away ; the other sufferers we left to be examined. The gun itself was split, and our second lieutenant, Roskruge, who came down at that moment with some orders, advised me to leave the Gun as useless. He had scarcely left us, when he was brought down senseless with a severe wound in his head : he breathed, but continued senseless until nine o'clock, when he died.

“The Battle continued until five o'clock. Seeing no signal from the *Victory*, and also missing Admiral Collingwood's flag, we were in much uneasiness on Board. The scene presented a strange contrast to the morning ; twenty-one or twenty-two sail of the Enemy's Line, Prizes and dismasted, one (*L'Achille*) burning furiously, which soon after blew up, the sky lowering in the distance, a heavy sea rising, and an awful kind of pause succeeding the crash of falling yards and masts and the roar of the guns.

“Having sent a boat to the *Victory*, we ascertained the death of Lord Nelson, our Commander-in-Chief.

“With hearts fraught with blended feelings of sorrow and of triumph, we set about putting the ship to rights. The evening was fine, though a storm seemed to be coming up, and around us as the darkness closed in the scattered and forlorn wrecks lay floating in disorder, while the conqueror’s ships were repairing damages, shifting prisoners, or making sail. It was a scene of desolation, helpless prizes and dismantled victors rolling heavily, as the sea began to roughen with the breeze.

. . . . .

“The whole night was occupied in receiving prisoners, and preparing for stormy weather, which was coming on.”

This is from the letter that a seaman on board the *Britannia*, James West, an A.B., wrote to his parents at Newhaven in Sussex:—

“I am sorry to inform you that I am wounded in the left shoulder, and that William Hillman was killed at the same time: the shot that killed him and three others wounded me and five more. Another of my messmates, Thomas Crosby, was also killed; they both went to their guns like men, and died close to me. Crosby was shot in three places. Pray inform their poor friends of their death, and remind them that they died at the same time as Nelson, and in the moment of glorious victory. Remember me to all my relations and friends; tell them I am wounded at last, but that I do not much mind it, for I had my satisfaction of my enemies, as I never fired

my gun in pain I was sure to hit them ; I killed and wounded them in plenty. Should have written you sooner, but the pain in my shoulder would not let me."

During the week following Trafalgar the *Britannia* received 381 French prisoners on board: 48 from *L'Aigle*, a captured seventy-four; 140 from the recaptured *Berwick*, a former British seventy-four; the rest from the captured *Intrépide*, another seventy-four. The names of all the prisoners are carefully entered in the *Britannia's* books, and among them appears the name of a Turk, mentioned also by Lieutenant Halloran as being received on board—Abdalla Fadalla, a prisoner from the *Intrépide*.

According to the ship's books these were the officers, in addition to Lord Northesk, serving on board the *Britannia* at Trafalgar:—

Captain—Charles Bullen.

Lieutenants—Arthur Atchison; Francis Roskruge (killed); John Houlton Marshall; Charles Anthony; Richard Lasham; William Blight; John Barclay; James Lindsay.

Marine Officers.—Captain—Alexander Watson. Lieutenants—William Jackson; L. B. J. Halloran; John Cooke.

Master—Stephen Trounce (wounded).

Surgeon—Allen Cornfoot.

Purser—James Hiatt.

Chaplain—Rev. Lawrence H. Halloran.

Gunner—Michael Aylward.

Boatswain—(not joined).

Carpenter—John Simpson.

Master's Mates and Midshipmen—John Adamson; Thos. Goble; James Sudbury; Silvester Austin; James Rattray; Henry Canham; Em. Blight; John Lang; William Snell; John W. Pritchard; William Grant (wounded); Francis D. Lauzun; William Geikie; Josh. Thorndyke; John Coulthred; Andrew Parry; Charles Thornbury; James L. Peyton; John Brumfield; George Hurst; George Morey; Charles Pitt; James Robinson; Radford G. Meech; Richard Molesworth; Charles Wilson; John Bidgood; John Lawrence; William Pinet; Richard B. Bowden; Benjamin Sheppard; William Pyne.

Surgeon's Mates — John Evans; John Owen Martin.

Clerk—Richard Whichelo.

First-class Volunteers—James R. Sullivan; Bowkum Tomkyns; Josh. Bailey.

A glance at the composition of the ship's company of the *Britannia*, according to the muster book, shows that the foreigners among the seamen on board numbered 53 in all. Of that total 18 were Americans, 11 Germans, 6 Danes, 4 Frenchmen, 1 Swede, 4 Dutchmen, 1 East Indian, 2 Africans, 2 Italians, and 4 from the West Indies. Ireland contributed 189 seamen ratings (the total number of seamen on board the *Britannia*, as mustered by the ship's books on Sunday morning, the day before

the battle, was 599); Scotland, 42; Wales, 25; the Isle of Man, 6; the Channel Islands, 5; and the Scilly Isles, Shetland, and Skye, 1 each. The full total of all ranks and ratings on board the *Britannia* at Trafalgar, as mustered on the 20th of October, numbered 31 officers, 599 seamen ratings (petty officers, able seamen, ordinary seamen, and landmen), 28 boys, 126 marines, 5 supernumeraries, and 8 "widows' men," making 797 in all. The ship's official complement as a first rate was 837, so that the *Britannia* was really 40 men short in the action.

One incidental fact that we learn from the *Britannia* may be added. It throws a useful sidelight on life and ways at sea in the navy of Nelson's day, dealing as it does with the relations that existed between officers and men on board while waiting off Cadiz for the expected battle. It proves for one thing also that Lord Northesk's flagship quite deserved the designation of a "happy ship." This was their favourite way of passing the time off duty, according to Lieutenant Halloran's journal.

"August 22nd. Heard that enemy had gone into Cadiz. We steered direct for that port. Here we remained blockading the place until the arrival of Lord Nelson in the *Victory*. During this time the officers and ship's company amused themselves with dramatic performances. Our first drama, acted in



the Admiral's cabin, was as appears in the following playbill :—

This evening, September 4th, 1805, will be performed a drama called

‘LORD HASTINGS.’

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Mr. Hurst.

EARL OF DERBY, Mr. Martin, assistant surgeon.

RATCLIFFE, Mr. Rattray.

CATESBY, Mr. Thorndyke, midshipman.

HASTINGS, Lieut. Halloran.

After which will be performed a drama called

‘THE TRIUMPH OF FRIENDSHIP ;

OR,

DAMON AND PYTHIAS.’

DIONYSIUS, Mr. Hurst.

GELON, Lieut. Halloran.

PALNURIUS, Mr. Austen.

ARGUS, Mr. Rattray.

DAMON, Mr. Martin.

PYTHIAS, Mr. Thorndyke.

Doors to be opened at 6.30. To begin at 7.

“Wednesday, September 4th. Off Cadiz. The ship's company also performed two or three plays on the main deck, one of them called ‘Miss in her Teens’ : very well done.

“Thursday, September 12th. We acted another play, called *The Siege of Colchester*, in which Rattray, Wilson, Bowden, and I took part. Between the acts I recited the romance of *Alonzo and Imogene*. On this occasion, the Admiral's fore-cabin being found

too small to hold stage and audience both, the fore bulk-head of the cabin was taken down, and the cabin itself turned into a stage, leaving the two side doors for the stage exits, and the cabin open to the main deck. The stage being decorated with colours, festoons, wings, etc., with front lights, had a very pretty effect. The main deck, fitted up with seats, made a capacious theatre, and all the officers and ship's company attended. All the future performances will be represented in the same manner.

“September 27th. Another party of the officers, under Lieut. Blight's direction, performed (with the addition of some good scenery, painted by Mr. Adams, master's mate) *The Mock Doctor*. Characters taken by Messrs. Pitt, Laurence, Johnstone, Geikie, Martin, and Peyton, with Masters Lauzun and Snell as Dorcas and Charlotte. The ship's company, whose theatre was amidships, near the main mast on the main deck, also performed *The Tragedy of Pizarro* and at the end of the first act was recited *The Soliloquy of Dick the Apprentice*.

“Wednesday, October 9th. We had the play of *Columbus ; or, A World Discovered*, and Rattray, Thorndyke, Wilson, Hurst, Pitt, Austin, Bidgood, and myself acted, the character of the High Priest of the Sun being taken by Wichelo, and ladies by Midshipmen Pinett and Pyne, Priestessess by Masters Shepherd, Bowden, Lever, Jones, etc. On the playbill it was announced, ‘In the course of the Performance will be two splendid Processions—a view of the Interior of the Temple of the Sun, with a Grand Altar

burning Incense, etc. Grand Hymn of the Priestesses, etc. Towards the close of the Play the Destruction of the Temple by an Earthquake accompanied by Thunder, Lightning, and Hail-Storm ! with the rescue of Cora from the Ruins by Alonzo !!

“*Catherine and Petruchio* was the last performance, a few days before the action of Trafalgar, together with a Play called *The Village*, which I wrote.

“It was on the evening of the 19th of October—Saturday—while I was with some officers in my cabin in the Gunroom, where we were preparing for another Play for the following Monday, and we were rehearsing, when one of the Midshipmen came to inform us that a Frigate was joining the Fleet, with signals flying ‘That the Enemy were at sea.’ We immediately broke up our theatrical conference. That night was partly passed in the bustle of preparation, while we stood under easy sail towards Cadiz.”<sup>1</sup>

We have in addition the text of a prologue to one of the midshipmen’s plays, presented before Lord Northesk and the officers. It gives one the best possible idea of the magnificent self-confidence with

<sup>1</sup> Of the names mentioned, Mr. Johnstone may possibly have been John Johnson, an ex-midshipman, rated an A.B. in July, 1805. Mr. Jones may have been Mr. Charles S. Jones, the captain’s coxswain. There were sixteen Jones’s altogether on the *Britannia*’s books, but none were among the officers, master’s mates, and midshipmen, or the first-class volunteers. There was no Lever on board the *Britannia* in any capacity.

which the British Fleet anticipated the issue of Trafalgar.

#### ADDRESS.

[*Spoken on board his Majesty's ship "Britannia," off Cadiz.*]

My Lord and Gentlemen,—Alas ! off Cadiz,  
 How hard it is we can't address the ladies,  
 For "if the brave alone deserve the fair,"  
 Britannia's sons should surely have their share !  
 But, since their valour, tho' upon record,  
 Like other merits, is its own reward,  
 Tho' female charms inspire us not—again  
 We welcome you—my Lord and Gentlemen !  
 You, too, brave fellows ! who the background tread,  
 Alike we welcome—jackets blue or red ;  
 And humbly hope that while we give our aid  
 "To cheer the tedium of a dull blockade,"  
 To banish *ennui* for a few short hours,  
 However feeble our theatric powers,  
 Our well-meant efforts to amuse awhile,  
 Will meet the wish'd reward—your fav'ring smile.

For tho', while thro' our parts we swell and pant,  
 We stun your ears with mock-heroic rant ;  
 We trust "to pay their sufferings through your eyes,"  
 By the bright splendours of the gay disguise  
 In which our heroes (nor let critics grin),  
 Bedight in robes of "bunting laced with tin,"  
 As kings or emperors, with mimic rage,  
 Strut their short hour upon this "floating stage."  
 In times of yore, as grave old authors write,  
 Poets possess'd a kind of "second sight,"  
 And could (tho', *entre nous*, 'twas all a hum)  
 Inform you clearly of "events to come."  
 Oh ! could the Bard, who, to amuse your time,  
 Has manufactur'd all this "doggerel rhyme,"  
 From mortal mists clear his desiring eyes,  
 And pry into your future destinies :  
 He would foretell (nor ask you, as a charm,  
 Like other soothsayers, "to cross his palm")  
 What—yes, he sees !—must on your courage wait,  
 "An happy fortune, and a glorious fate !"

Yes !—he foresees—confirm his prospects, Heav'n,  
 "Yon coop'd up boasters," to your wishes giv'n ;  
 Sees their proud ensigns from their standards torn,  
 Their vanquish'd navies in glad triumph borne ;  
 Sees added laurels grace our Nelson's brow,  
 And Victory hovering o'er his glowing prow ;  
 His conqu'ring banners o'er the waves unfurl'd,  
 And Britain's thunder rule the wat'ry world.  
 If aught of prescience to the Muse belong,  
 Soon, soon, the scenes that animate her song,  
 In glowing colours shall salute your eyes,  
 And Heav'n shall bid th' auspicious morn arise ;  
 When France and Spain shall be again subdued,  
 And your "brave leader's" victories renew'd.

Then, to reward your persevering toils,  
 With honours crown'd—enrich'd with hostile spoils—  
 (Her bravest sons—her guardian sailors' friend)  
 "Your grateful country" shall her arms extend,  
 To greet your glad return with conscious pride,  
 And in her bosom bid your cares subside.  
 And, while our fam'd "Britannia" shall resort,  
 In awful grandeur to her wished-for port,  
 Her loveliest daughters shall with pleasure meet,  
 And bless "the heroes of the British fleet !"  
 Your wives, your children, and your friends shall come,  
 With tears of joy to bid you "welcome home."  
 Nor storms nor battle more your bliss shall mar,  
 But "Peace and Plenty crown the toils of war !"

At this point we may fitly end the story of "Old Ironsides" at Trafalgar—and this book.



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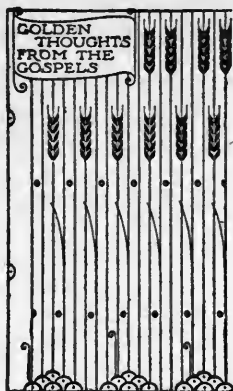
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